

Town of Seward

Draft Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

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Insert Adoption Date

**Created by
Town of Seward
Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Committee
with assistance from**

American Farmland Trust

Acknowledgements

Town of Seward Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan

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Executive Summary

Seward is a rural community located in Schoharie County. Farming and the scenic open space agricultural land provides are what residents value most about their community. In order to accommodate future development while ensuring that farming continues to be a viable enterprise, the town has developed an agriculture and farmland protection plan. The goals of the plan are to:

- Goal I: Support Agriculture at the Town Level
- Goal II: Foster Economic Opportunity for Agriculture
- Goal III: Educate the Public About Agriculture
- Goal IV: Protect Natural Resources and Open Space

What follows are the recommendations the plan makes to achieve the above goals.

Goal I: Support Agriculture at the Town Level

Recommendations

A. Land Use Planning

1. Form an Agricultural Advisory Committee
2. Represent Agricultural Interests on Appointed Boards
3. Provide Training in Agricultural Land Use Planning
4. Develop a Comprehensive Plan that Supports Agriculture
5. Educate Realtors and Home Builders About Benefits of Retaining Agricultural Land
6. Consider Conservation Subdivisions
7. Consider Cooperative Farm Subdivisions

B. Agricultural Districts

1. Ensure Agricultural District Law is Followed
2. Educate Town Officials, Staff and Assessors

C. Property Taxes

1. Ensure All Interested and Eligible Landowners Receive Agricultural Assessment
2. Consider Adopting Agricultural Assessment for Service Districts
3. Train Assessors on Assessing Agricultural Land and Structures
4. Ensure Accuracy of Property Type Classification Codes
5. Protect Farms From Negative Impacts of Commercial and Industrial Development

D. Working Lands

1. Make Roads Safe for Agricultural Equipment
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3. Maintain Agricultural Data at the Town Level

E. Land in Transition

1. Market Town to Farmers
2. Provide Assistance to Farmers in Transition to Keep Land in Agriculture
3. Encourage Beginning Farmers

F. Farmland Protection

1. Educate Landowners About Conservation Easements
2. Research Viability of Lease of Development Rights Program
3. Review Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Every Five Years
4. Participate in Updating Schoharie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Goal II: Foster Economic Opportunities for Agriculture

Recommendations

1. Disseminate Information About Economic Opportunity
2. Support Government Initiatives to Stabilize Milk Prices
3. Collaborate to Develop Agricultural Cooperative

A. Livestock

Action i: Raise and Market Grassfed and Pastured Meats

Action ii: Take Advantage of Ethnic Market

Action iii: Offer Horse Boarding

B. Crops

Action i: Develop Local Value-Added Processing Infrastructure

Action ii: Produce and Market Custom Hay

C. Direct Marketing

1. Support Dairy Farmers Converting to Direct Marketing
2. Expand Area Farmers Markets
3. Sell Local Farm Products to Tourists
4. Encourage Farmers to Work Together to Participate in Urban Markets
5. Increase Rural Access to High Speed Internet
6. Support Development of Community Supported Agriculture

Goal III: Educate People About Agriculture

1. Produce Brochure About Agriculture for Town Residents
2. Educate Children in Community About Agriculture
3. Support Development of Social Network for Farmers

Goal IV: Protect Natural Resources and Open Space

1. Work Together to Protect Water Quality
2. help Farmers Take Advantage of Natural Resource Conservation Programs
3. Research Opportunities for On-Farm Production of Renewable Energy
4. Produce and Market Biofuels

Introduction

The Town of Seward lies in northwestern Schoharie County. The western town line borders Otsego County. The Town of Sharon Springs lies to the north, the Towns of Carlisle and Cobleskill to the east and the Town of Richmondville to the south. The Town includes the small hamlets of Dorloo, Gardnersville, Hyndsville, Janesville and Seward.

Insert Location Map

The Town of Seward is an approximately one-hour drive from the City of Albany, the state's capital, and two-and-a-half hours from the New York Metropolitan Area, the largest city in the United States. The Town is in close proximity to the Village of Cobleskill, which is home to over 4,500 people, as well as the State University of New York at Cobleskill (SUNY Cobleskill) and its School of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Portions of three state highways, NYS Routes 10, 145 and 165, cross through the Town of Seward. Route 10 is the busiest of the three. According to the NYS Department of Transportation statistics approximately 2,700 vehicles a day travel Route 10, less than 1,360 on Route 145 and less than 1,000 on Route 165

Agriculture has historically been and remains the foundation of the Town of Seward's economy, producing food, employing people and paying taxes. Seward's farms provide open space, buffer natural resources and protect water quality. Schoharie County's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan names the *Seward/Sharon Dairy Area* as one of the County's four significant agricultural areas.

The Town of Seward is comprised primarily of agricultural lands, forest, scattered residential development and very limited commercial development. The town is 36.5 square miles or 23,360 acres in size. The entire town is included within agricultural district number three with the exception of some of its hamlets.

At the time of the 2000 U.S. Census of Population Seward had a population of 1,646 and 685 households. This is a slight decrease from the 1990 population of 1,651. The Census estimated the town's population in 2008 to be 1,729. The 2010 Census is being conducted at the time of this writing.

Planning Process

In 2007 the Town of Seward and the neighboring Town of Carlisle, with Seward acting as lead agency, applied for a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (NYSDAM) of \$50,000 to fund the joint development of two municipal agricultural and farmland protection plans. This funding is made available through NYSDAM's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program which supports local efforts to protect agricultural land and ensure the economic viability of the agricultural industry.

Farming is vital to the health of New York State's economy, environment and communities. The importance of farmland is reflected in the New York State Constitution:

"the policy of this state shall be to conserve and protect its natural resources and scenic beauty and encourage the development and improvement of its agricultural lands for the production of food and other agricultural products..."

In 1992 the Agricultural Protection Act was passed creating the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program to support local efforts to protect agricultural land and ensure the continued economic viability of the state's agricultural industry. The program funds the development of local agricultural and farmland protection plans and implementation grants such as funds for the purchase of agricultural conservation easements.

Local governments play an important role in protecting farmland. New York is a "home rule" state where town government officials make land use decisions and enforce them through local laws such as zoning ordinances and subdivision regulations. Agriculture and farmland protection plans are developed at both the town and county level. The majority of the counties in the state with farmland, including Schoharie County, already have agriculture and farmland protection plans in place. The state is now making funding available to counties to update their plans. Schoharie County is eligible to apply for renewal and plans to put in an application. As of 2010 62 towns have adopted or are developing plans.

Agriculture and farmland protection plans enable communities to take stock of existing agricultural resources, including working farms, high quality farmland, and farm-related infrastructure. The plans recommend strategies for retaining farmland, educating the non-farming public about agricultural practices and ensuring that local regulations do not impede farmers' ability to take advantage of economic opportunities that will help them grow their business.

On February 27, 2008 the state awarded Seward and Carlisle a grant to develop municipal agricultural and farmland protection plans for each town. The Seward and Carlisle town boards then appointed committees made up of farmers and other residents to oversee the development of each town's plan. From these two committees a joint executive agriculture and farmland protection plan committee was appointed to meet regularly to develop the plans.

The committee hired American Farmland Trust (AFT) as a consultant to help in the development of the plan. AFT is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to saving farmland and supporting a sustainable future for farms and communities. AFT's New York State office is headquartered in Saratoga Springs with field representatives working across the state. In addition the towns have received assistance from the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency (SCPDA), the Schoharie County Cooperative Extension (CCE) as well as the county's Soil and Water Conservation District and Real Property Tax Service Agency.

While developing the plan the committee:

- inventoried the various types of agriculture in Seward and conducted a windshield survey of farms in the town
- created a map of the town's current active agricultural land by working with aerial photographs and maps
- conducted extensive community outreach
- analyzed the economic impact of agriculture on the towns
- reviewed the town's land use regulations and offered suggestions on how they could be revised to be more farm friendly
- formulated goals to accomplish with the plan

- drafted recommendations for how those goals could be achieved, along with suggestions on how to implement the recommendations

The intention of this plan is to balance a steady increase in residential and commercial development and the rights of individual property owners with the community's collective desire to remain a farming town. This plan establishes goals for sustaining agriculture and makes recommendations on how to achieve these goals. The recommendations are offered as a guideline for town planning and the Town Board must approve any actions recommended by this plan before they can be undertaken.

By developing an agricultural and farmland protection plan the Town of Seward has positioned itself to remain a viable farming community as it grows in the future. Through strategies such as supporting farmers with farm friendly land use policies, working regionally to foster new economic opportunities for agriculture, and guiding dense residential development away from working agricultural land, Seward intends to accommodate growth while continuing its agricultural tradition.

Community Outreach

The Town of Seward sought and received much helpful input from the community during the development of the plan's goals and recommendations. American Farmland Trust conducted interviews with ten farmers and owners of agricultural lands in the Town. Seward held a public meeting during which the members of the community shared their thoughts and concerns about the business of agriculture and the use of farmland in the town through a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) exercise led by American Farmland Trust.

In addition the town, in cooperation with the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency (SCPDA), conducted a survey of town residents on the topic of land use. Although the primary purpose of the survey was to provide the town with information that could be used in the drafting of a comprehensive land use plan, the survey included many questions about agriculture and was an excellent resource during the development of the town's agricultural and farmland protection plan.

Farming in Seward

Palatine Germans from Dorlach, Germany, fleeing religious persecution, first settled Seward in the mid 18th century. They called their settlement New Dorlach. They struggled to make a living off the land and were assisted greatly by the Native Americans who already made the region their home. The community barely survived severe violence and destruction during the Revolutionary War. Originally part of the Town of Sharon the town officially formed in 1840 and was named after William H. Seward, senator, governor and secretary of state.

As it grew the town became home to many dairy farms. "The Dairy Interest in the town has become of marked proportions," wrote historian William Roscoe in the *History of Schoharie County 1713-1992*. "The pure spring water of the hills, and succulent grasses, unite to make dairying a special feature of the farmer's pursuits." The town became a center for cheese and butter making, producing more cheese than any other town in Schoharie County. During the late 1800s the town was home to three major cheese producers: Seward Valley Cheese Factory; Seward Centre Cheese Factory; and Gardnersville Cheese Factory.

According to the Schoharie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan the towns of Seward and Sharon constitute the County's "standout farm areas" in terms of general agriculture. "They represent the prime dairy farm areas of the County and, along with portions of Carlisle, the single largest block of agricultural district land in the County."

The prolonged volatility of the prices paid to modern New York dairy farmers combined with rising operating costs has resulted in a steady decline in the number of dairy farms. According to the assessor's records of property receiving agricultural assessment, today only 15 dairy farmers work agricultural land in the Town of Seward. Some of these farms have dairy farms located in Seward and some dairy farmers who's farms are located outside of Seward own or rent farmland in the town.

There has been some interest in the town in organic dairy and several farmers in Seward and neighboring towns have converted to organic milk production to take advantage of the higher pay price. However, organic dairy has suffered alongside conventional dairy in the latest and most severe downturn.

Other farmers in Seward are raising beef, pork, poultry and organic forage crops for livestock feed. Also raised in the town are horses, sheep, meat goats, bees, fruit and vegetables. According to the town's agricultural assessment records the town has: one vegetable farm; one tree farm; two beef and pork operations; three farmers producing and selling hay alone; one organic hay and crop farmer; six farmers raising hay and beef; one farmer raising hay and horses; and one farmer raising hay and goats. These farms in addition to the dairy activity add up to a total of 31 farms.

Insert Agricultural Lands Map

Map: Agricultural Lands Map

Soils

The entire Town of Seward, 23,360 acres in size, falls entirely within agricultural district number 3. The northern half of the town, bordering Sharon Springs encompasses part of a broad swath of Mohawk-Honeoye association soils that run from east to west, beginning in the western regions of the Towns of Carlisle and Cobleskill, and moving through Seward into Sharon Springs creating the *Seward/Sharon Dairy Area*, referred to as one of the four most significant agricultural areas in county's agriculture and farmland protection plan.

According to the *Soil Survey for Schoharie County* Mohawk-Honeoye association soils are among the better soils formed in glacial till in the county. Mohawk-Honeoye association soils are deep, high lime soils that can be gently sloping or increasingly steep and range from well to moderately-well drained. Because of the range in slope from gentle to steep these soils are best suited to dairy farming, along with the production of corn, oats and hay. Areas too steep, stony or wet for cultivation provide farm woodlots and pasture.

A narrower band of Darien-Nunda association soil runs through the middle of the town. This section features deep, medium-lime soils on moderate slopes that range from somewhat poorly drained to well-drained. The Darien-Nunda association is also suited to dairy farming as well as producing corn, oats and hay. Some areas are too wet to cultivate. The southern part of town is composed of a Lordstown-Morain soil association. These moderately deep soils are well drained but strongly acid. Much of the area with the Lordstown-Morain soil is too steep and rocky to be cultivated but is still useful as pasture. A significant amount of this land has been reforested.

Insert Soil Map

Map: Soil Map

Environmental and Recreational Benefits of Farmland in Seward

Working farmland is responsible for much of the open space in the Town of Seward. Ninety percent of the respondents to the Town of Seward land use survey wanted to preserve the rural nature of the Town. Open space and a rural environment are critical to town residents' quality of life.

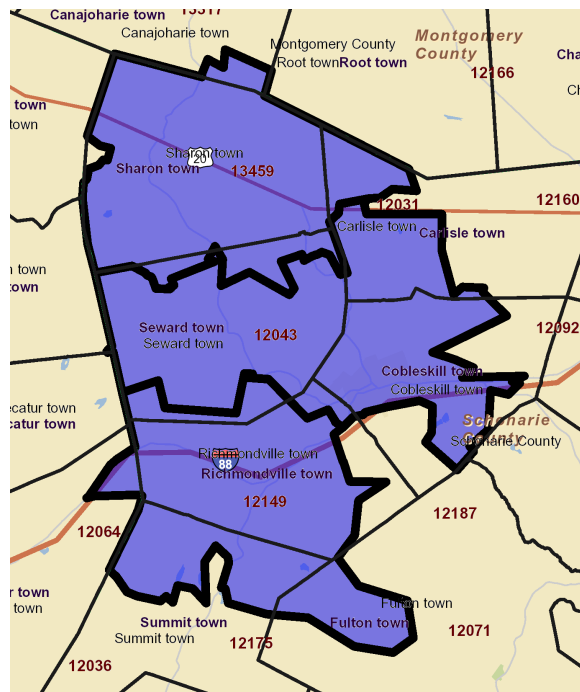
Agricultural land also provides food and cover for wildlife, helps control flooding, and protects wetlands and watersheds. Farmland absorbs and filters wastewater and run off and provides groundwater recharge that protects the quality of drinking water in the town.

Farmland and associated woodlands provide opportunities for outdoor recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, cross country skiing, bicycling and snowmobiling. Many farmers allow hunters access to their land during hunting season. With permission from farmers not-for-profit snowmobile clubs such as the Sharon Pathfinders maintain over 200 miles of trails in the region. The snowmobilers express appreciation for the access farmers grant them with an annual landowner appreciation dinner.

Economic and Fiscal Impacts of Agriculture in the Town of Seward

As an industry, the total economic impact that agriculture has in the Town of Seward is undeniably significant. As previously indicated, the town primarily consists of rural residential and agricultural land uses. There is no significant impact from retail, manufacturing, or service based businesses located within the town.

A full inventory of agricultural census data is not available at the town level. However, an analysis of the 2007 agricultural census data by zip code is available, and can provide us with some reasonable information to further assess the economic impact that agriculture has on the area surrounding the Town of Seward. However, we must be mindful that the Town of Seward is serviced by 3 different zip codes that also encompass the Towns of Sharon, Carlisle, Cobleskill and Richmondville (see map below)



(Source: ESRI – Business Analyst)

In the Town of Seward as is the case for all of Schoharie County, the largest sector of the agricultural industry is by far dairy farming. According to the 2007 Census of Agriculture, the sale of dairy products in 2007 was

valued at \$21,287,000 or 60% of the total sales of agricultural products in the County (\$35,153,000). Of the 74 dairy farms included in this value, approximately 10 are located in the Town of Seward and 5 additional dairy farms utilize portions of land in the town although the headquarters of their operations are located in a neighboring town. Using an average value of milk products sold of \$288,000 per farm, (based on total value of all sales in the county \$21,287,000 divided by 74 farms) it is reasonable to value the amount of dairy products sold in the Town of Seward at \$2,880,000. Using a conservative economic multiplier of 2.5¹, that \$2.8 million in dairy sales becomes a value of \$7.2 million whence it is turned over within the community. If we apply a more widely cited dairy agricultural economic multiplier of 3.2 to this figure, the overall economic impact of the Town of Seward's dairy farms is valued at \$9.2 million. Again, this is an estimated value, assuming that each dairy farm is of equal size, which we know is not the case. This value also does not take into account that one of the dairy farms located in the Town is an organic dairy, which receives a higher premium than conventionally produced fluid milk. In addition, we also must recognize that while some of the \$2.8 million in milk sold is turned over within Seward itself, the economic multiplier effect is much more significant on the county and regional economies. As it may have been in the past, many of the products and services utilized by a dairy farm may not be right in their own town, but New York Farm Bureau estimates that most dairy farms purchase most of their equipment, feed, and services from companies that are within 50-100 miles of them.

As much as the dairy industry has dominated agriculture in the town, region and state over the last 75 years, dairy farming is equally a sector at risk. While this plan was under development the New York's Dairy Farmers were hit with the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. Dairy Farmers were receiving less than \$12 per hundredweight (cwt) for milk for much of 2009 while the estimated cost of production was well over \$17/cwt. Although the price of milk has somewhat rebounded researchers from Cornell University have estimated that the dairy industry continues to reel from the economic downturn. Some dairy farms lost nearly ½ of their farm's total assets, which will take years, if not decades to rebound from.

According to the Schoharie County Office of Real Property Services (SCORPS), the total market value of all property (land only) receiving an agricultural exemption in the Town of Seward in 2010 was \$10,022,060.00. The value of land and buildings on parcels receiving an agricultural exemption was \$17,467,360.00. Given the Town of Seward and County tax rates from 2010, property taxes generated from agricultural parcels include:

\$127,530 paid to Schoharie County

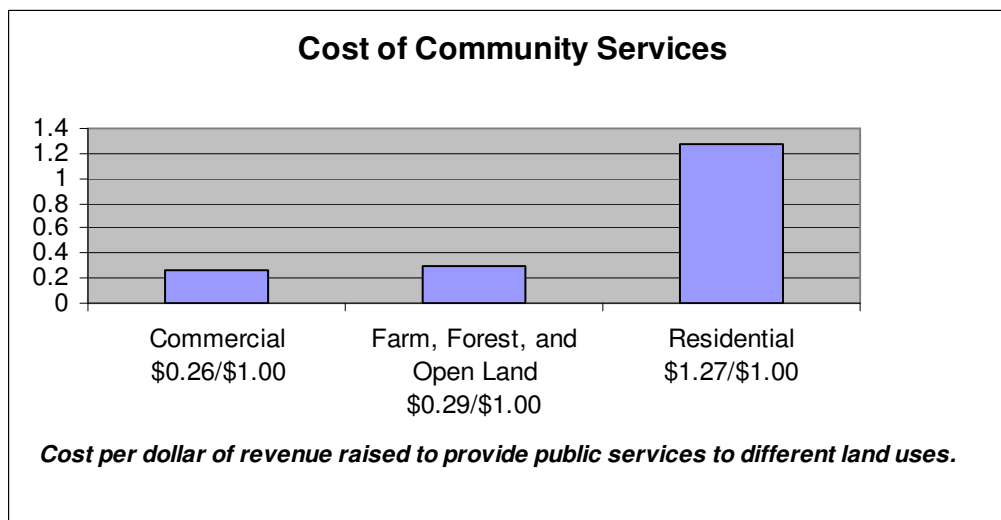
\$81,318 paid to the Town

\$300,745 paid to the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District

In addition, property taxes to the School Districts of Sharon Springs at a rate of \$25.998529 (per thousand).

It is widely accepted that there are numerous tax advantages to maintaining an agricultural base within the town and minimizing residential development. Cost of Community Service Studies (COCS), developed by American Farmland Trust determine the difference between taxes generated by different types of land uses and the cost of services each type of land use requires. As you can see from the graph below, farm, forest, and open land by far pays more than it requires in services while residential development actually costs more to serve than what they generate in tax dollars.

¹ The concept refers to the fact that each dollar generated by a specific industry is subsequently recirculated throughout the local economy. The frequency of recirculation determines the overall impact the particular industry has on the local economy. Professor Nelson Bills of Cornell University has developed economic multipliers for regions within New York State. The economic multiplier for the central New York region, including Schoharie County, is 3.235.



Information from Haight et al. "New York Agriculture Landowner Guide". Saratoga Springs: American Farmland Trust, 2009.

Figure: Cost of Community Services

Conversion Pressure

Housing development in the Town began to increase significantly during the 1970s, a decade during which 108 new houses were constructed. During the 1980s another 103 houses were built. By 1990 there were 662 houses in the Town of Seward. According to the Schoharie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan 44 of these were second homes. The county plan states that between 1989 and 1993 26 single family building permits were issued and between 1989 and 1997 674 real property transfers occurred.

According to the U.S. Census, in the year 2000 there were 685 houses in the Town of Seward, an increase of only 3 percent since 1990.

Since 2001 another 198 permits for new construction have been issued. If all of these construction projects were completed the number of houses in Seward is now 883, an increase of nearly 30 percent since the year 2000.

Town of Seward Building Permits New Construction	
Year	Permits
2009	9
2008	18
2007	14
2006	35
2005	28
2004	30
2003	21
2002	21
2001	22
Total	198

The Town of Seward is an approximately one-hour drive from the Greater Capital Region and a two-and-a-half hours from New York City, the largest city in the United States. The town is in close proximity to the Village of Cobleskill, which is home to over 4,500 people as well as the State University of New York at Cobleskill (SUNY/Cobleskill).

Portions of three state highways, NYS Routes 10, 145 and 165 cross through the Town of Seward. Route 10 is the busiest of the three. According to the NYS Department of Transportation statistics approximately 2,700 vehicles a day travel route 10, less than 1,360 on Route 145 and less than 1,000 on Route 165.

Seward is located approximately 3 miles north of Interstate Route 88, with Route 145 serving as a connection. Route 145 also connects the town to US Route 20, which runs just north of the town's northern boundary line. A Wal-Mart regional distribution center is located on Route 20 near Sharon Springs. Seward is located between the distribution center and the I-88 interchange with NYS Rt. 145. This convenience for trucking may result in increased commercial development.

Close to Cobleskill and within driving distance of the Capital Region, Seward is attractive to commuters looking for a rural home. The town has also attracted people from the New York Metropolitan Area seeking retirements homes or second homes. Realtors based in the Village of Cobleskill actively market agricultural land in Seward to downstate residents and during the crisis in milk prices have approached struggling dairy farmers offering them the option of selling their land for residential development.

Because of slim profit margins traditionally associated with agriculture many farmers are unable to save money for retirement and instead must rely on the equity in their land. In addition, non-farmers who own agricultural land in the Town may choose to develop their land. As the Town's

population grows it is likely that some farmland will be developed. This plan provides recommendations for ways in which Town residents can work together to minimize any negative impacts potential development may have on working farms and ensure the strongest future possible for active farming in the Town.

Prioritizing Agricultural Land

State agricultural and market law provides for the development of municipal agriculture and farmland protection plans. According to the language of the law plans shall include the "location of any land or areas proposed to be protected."

The Schoharie County Agriculture and Farmland Protection plan places a priority on preserve land in agricultural districts with soil groups rated as "highly suited" for agriculture. The plan singles out what it refers to as the "Seward/Sharon dairy area" as one of four significant agricultural areas. According to the County plan these major blocks of farmland should be designated as core agricultural districts which should include not just commercial agricultural land but also adjacent and intervening buffers in order to protect the industry from incompatible land use activities and complaints from non-farming neighbors.

The entire Town of Seward, with the exception of some hamlet areas, is included in agricultural district number three and already receives the protections that come with the state's agricultural district program. The County plan refers to the agricultural district program as "an excellent tool to which zoned communities can link their land use planning and on which the County, if it desires, can build a lease or purchase of development rights program for interested farmers."

Some Seward farmers interviewed during the research for the development of this plan believe that the high quality of farmland in certain parts of the town combined with its likelihood of being developed is enough to justify some form of protection. They believe other farmland does not need protection because it is unlikely to be developed. “What would make sense would be for the town to set aside a few farms worthy of preservation that are good to build on. That makes sense to me.” said one farmer. “If they don’t get protected, when a farmer quits a developer will buy the land and subdivide it to make money. Next thing you know you have missed an opportunity.”

The Schoharie County agricultural and farmland protection plan’s third stated goal is to “preserve a critical mass of both farmers and agribusiness to support competition and provide a foundation for a sound agricultural economy, maintaining a base of 100,000 acres of Schoharie County land in farming (including 50,000 acres in cultivation).”

Many farmers in Schoharie County worry that without large, contiguous tracts of farmland, agriculture will no longer be a viable industry in the town and have expressed interest in protecting a critical mass of farmland. The question of exactly what constitutes a “critical mass” of farmland is complex.

Scenic Hudson, a significant Hudson Valley land trust has taken what they call a “critical mass” approach to protecting farmland by working with farmers to purchase agricultural easements from farms in Hudson Valley towns such as Red Hook. They assert that preserving a core or critical mass of farmland in a region assures a setting favorable for farming. Scenic Hudson states that there is no universal definition of a critical mass of farmland but instead it is a locally determined margin of viability. Acreage protected through agricultural easements in the Town of Red Hook has exceeded the original goal of 1,000 acres.

In 2002 American Farmland Trust conducted a study entitled “Is There a Critical Mass of Agricultural Land Needed to Sustain an Agricultural Economy? Evidence from Six Mid-Atlantic States.” According to this study the critical mass concept is based on the idea that a certain amount of agricultural activity must be sustained in order for the agricultural economy in an area to remain viable. As production levels decline below a given threshold, costs will rise. A decline in agricultural profits and thus a higher relative return for conversion to other uses, such as residential housing, may increase the rate of loss of farmland in the area. Increased property taxes brought about by the increased demand for services that comes with residential development will escalate costs further for agriculture, causing yet more farms to go out of business continuing the cycle of farmland loss and residential development.

Land Use Regulation & Land Use Plans

The Town of Seward Land Use Code is comprised of zoning regulations, subdivision regulations and regulations governing the siting of mobile homes and the development of mobile home parks and trailer camps. The Land Use Code was originally adopted in 1997 and amended in 2006 and then 2007. The Land Use Code is relatively simple and reflective of the rural and agricultural character of the community. The zoning schedule appear in the appendix of this plan.

Insert zoning map

According to the Town of Seward Land Use Code agriculture is a permitted use within the town’s Residential Agricultural (RA) and Open Space (OS) zoning districts. These two zoning districts appear to cover 90 to 95 percent of land in the town.

Seward does not have a comprehensive land use in place but has conducted a land use survey to find out how town residents would like to see their town grow. The results of this survey are in the appendix.

The Future of Farming

The Town of Seward needs to find ways to sustain its established farms and at the same time, promote alternative and value-added agricultural enterprises. Seward's contiguous tracts of agricultural land enable commodity farmers to produce their crops without significantly impacting residential areas. However, scattered residential development is beginning to fragment agricultural lands, making it more difficult for farmers to work the land. An increase in traffic has also made it difficult for farmers to move agricultural equipment along the roads.

The community is extremely supportive of farming and most believe that the best way to protect farmland is to keep farms profitable, however this is difficult under current economic conditions. There is no doubt that serious challenges lie ahead for farmers in the Town of Seward. Such challenges, which are documented in the interview summary found in the appendix of this plan, include: lack of a support infrastructure and farm labor force; difficulty moving farm equipment on roads; narrow profit margins; high input costs; depressed milk prices; and property taxes.

Fortunately, by coming together to plan for the future of agriculture in the town, the community has accomplished several important things. The process of developing an agricultural and farmland protection plan has helped the community understand the scope of agricultural activity occurring in the Town. In addition, the community has identified the problems it faces in retaining its farm businesses and agricultural land such as property taxes, road safety and a lack of public understanding of agriculture. Lastly, through developing this plan, Seward has created strategies for thoughtful land use planning that will minimize development's impact on agriculture. The town has also devised ways of supporting existing agricultural businesses at the town level while working towards creating new economic opportunities for farmers. Examples of such strategies include: the development of a town agricultural committee; support for direct marketing; improving broadband access; and developing an educational brochure about local agriculture for town residents.

Goals & Recommendations

Goal I

Support Agriculture at the Town Level

Encourage town governments to be proactive in identifying and resolving issues impacting agriculture. Strengthen the business of agriculture in the town with farm friendly town policies and land use regulations. Retain the critical mass of agricultural land necessary for agriculture to remain the primary land use in the towns by providing incentives for landowners to continue agricultural activities and to keep land available for agriculture use.

A. Agricultural Land Use Planning

Recommendation 1

Form Agricultural Advisory Committee

Although it could be challenging due to lack of farmer participation in town government the town board should establish an agricultural advisory committee to address issues affecting agriculture. This committee would be responsible for working with the town board to implement the recommendations of the town's agriculture and farmland protection plan and address any issues impacting agriculture that may arise in the future. (*see sample town resolution forming an agricultural advisory committee in appendix*)

Recommendation 2

Represent Agricultural Interests on Appointed Boards & Committees

Encourage the presence of individuals from the agricultural community on the town's appointed boards and committees whenever possible.

Recommendation 3

Provide Training in Agricultural Land Use Planning

Provide quality training in agricultural land use planning, New York State agricultural district law and the state's farmland protection program for members of the town board, planning board zoning board of appeals, town attorney and code enforcement officer. Such training is available from organizations such as the New York Planning Federation, American Farmland Trust, New York State Department of State's Office of Local Government Services, New York State Office of Real Property Services and New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets. Contact information for these organizations is provided in the Resources section of this plan. *(see appendix for NYS brochure on its Land Use Training Program).*

Recommendation 4

Develop a Comprehensive Plan that Supports Agriculture

Develop a comprehensive land use plan that strongly supports agriculture. A comprehensive plan represents a community's vision for the future and a road map of how to get there. Comprehensive plans serve as the foundation of town planning and zoning efforts and can form the basis of a local land use strategy by identifying areas best suited for farming and forestry as well as areas where development should be encouraged. The Town of Seward has already taken the first step towards this goal by conducting a land use plan survey in 2009.

Recommendation 5

Educate Realtors and Home Builders About the Benefits of Retaining Agricultural Land

Educate homebuilders, developers and realtors on the benefits of retaining agricultural land and how they can develop their land in a way that will minimize negative impact on farming activities. Produce a brochure that offers examples of how an individual landowner can design their lot in way in which preserves farmland. *(looking for educational brochure sample to illustrate this recommendation, floating this idea as potential project for AFT in collaboration with municipalities)*

Recommendation 6

Consider Conservation Subdivisions

Review the concept of conservation subdivision and how it differs from cluster development. Cluster development is currently part of Seward's land use regulations. Residential cluster development groups houses on a portion of the available land while reserving a significant amount of the land as protected open space. A higher density allowance often acts as an incentive for the developer to opt for cluster design. In cluster design generally the housing sites are designated first and the open space tends to be the land unsuitable for development that is left over.

Conservation subdivision takes the cluster design concept one step further requiring the agricultural land to be set aside for conservation be designated first. The houses are then located in a way that allows the housing sites to take the most advantage of their proximity to the farmland. This undeveloped land is not an afterthought or what is "leftover" but instead the organizing principal of the development. This is not a new concept but instead is an old tradition with its roots in agriculture where houses in a community were grouped near what were considered "common lands" for the growing of crops and pasturing of livestock.

Town officials need to be educated about conservation subdivisions. Town regulations should be updated to encourage conservation subdivisions as a means to protecting high quality agricultural land and specify that land set aside as part of a subdivision should not just be considered as open space but be available for agriculture.

Recommendation 7

Consider Cooperative Farm Subdivisions

Research the viability for cooperative farm subdivisions (see Charlton plan, appendix). Cooperative farm subdivisions are similar to cluster housing or conservation subdivisions in which a piece of land is subdivided for homes, leaving a section of undeveloped land. However in a cooperative farm subdivision this is done with the specific intention of retaining the open piece of land for agricultural use. The land can be preserved jointly by the homeowners and used for agricultural purposes such as small crops, or horse pasture.

B. Agricultural Districts

Recommendation 1

Ensure Agricultural District Law is Followed

Make sure that the requirements of the state's agricultural district law are being adhered to during the subdivision and site plan review process and clarify which town officials are responsible for making sure the requirements are met. Examples of these requirements include: disclosure notices advising future property owners that the property is in an agricultural district and features of modern agricultural practices that will be ongoing prior to signing of purchase agreement; filing of agricultural data statements for certain land use determinations within 500 feet of a farm operation located in an agricultural district; filing of a notice of intent and detailed agricultural impact statement prior to the expenditure of public funds on certain non-farm projects proposed in an agricultural district. A sample agricultural disclosure notice is included in the appendix of this plan.

Recommendation 2

Educate Town Officials, Staff & Assessors

Hold a meeting of all town officials, committee members, staff and the assessor. Distribute copies of the state agricultural district law, the town's right to farm law and agriculture and farmland protection plan. Discuss the importance of agriculture to the community. The purpose of this meeting would be to build awareness among all town representatives of the priority the town places on retaining agricultural land and supporting farm operations as well as the requirements and recommendations regarding agriculture at both the state and local level.

C. Property Taxes

Recommendation 1

Ensure All Eligible and Interested Landowners Receive Agricultural Assessment

Property taxes are often cited as a major obstacle to retaining ownership of farmland. Ensure that all eligible farmers and owners of agriculture land are receiving all the tax relief through various existing programs that they are eligible for and opt to take advantage of. Such programs include: agricultural assessment; farm building exemptions; farmers' school tax credit; forestland exemption; historic barns rehabilitation tax credit; orchard and vineyard exemption; sales tax exemptions; NYS conservation easement tax credit. Information and contact details are provided in the *New York Agricultural Landowner Guide* provided in the appendix of this plan.

Consider having the assessor periodically send out a letter to owners of agricultural land informing them about agricultural assessment and the required record keeping.

Recommendation 2

Consider Adopting Agricultural Assessment for Service Districts

Research the viability of basing taxes for service districts on agricultural assessments. The governing body of a fire protection or ambulance district may adopt a resolution stating that agricultural assessment values should be used to determine the taxes levied by that district. Such a measure ensures that farmland is taxed at its current, non-speculative value, recognizing that farmland generally requires fewer public services and should be taxed accordingly.

Recommendation 3

Train Assessor on Assessing Agricultural Land & Structures

Ensure regular training for assessor on assessing agricultural land and buildings. Courses are available through the New York State Office of Real Property Services and Cornell University. Training sessions are offered in classroom settings, online and through self-study programs. All assessors are required to receive training and certification by the Office of Real Property Services. However the “Introduction to Farm Appraisal” training session is not required to be taken by the assessor until their third year in office. If the assessor has not yet received training specific to assessing agricultural land the towns could encourage the assessor to put a priority on taking this course up front.

Recommendation 4

Ensure Accuracy of Property Type Classification Codes

During review of agricultural parcels in the towns conducted during the background research for the town’s agricultural and farmland protection plan, it became apparent that a large number of parcels of agricultural land are coded with an incorrect property type classification code. Property type classification codes, developed by the New York State Office of Real Property Services, form a uniform property classification system to be used by municipalities in assessment administration. The towns need to conduct a thorough review of tax maps and property codes and make sure all land, particularly farmland receives the appropriate property type classification code. (*see property classification codes in appendix*)

Recommendation 5

Protect Farms From Negative Impacts of Commercial and Industrial Development

Encourage the location of light industry and retail operations in the town that will not have a negative impact on agriculture. Such commercial development can contribute to the town’s tax base and help alleviate tax pressure on agriculture.

D. Working Lands

Recommendation 1

Make Roads Safe for Farmers Operating Agricultural Equipment

Work with the county and the state to make sure that appropriate speed limits are established and enforced on routes frequently traveled by farm vehicles. Make sure the appropriate signage appears in areas where there is limited visibility or other risks involving farm traffic.

Rural roads should be suitable for rural traffic and farm equipment. When roads are overbuilt, the speed of traffic increases. In addition bridges need to be constructed to accommodate farm equipment. Provide ample posting of speed limits on town roads and work with other agencies to post sufficient speed limit signage on roads they oversee. Make arrangements with Schoharie County Sheriff Services to enforce speed limits. Offer training to farmers on how to safely navigate farm equipment along town roads. Educate town residents on sharing the road with farm equipment. Distribute brochures and other safety information regarding slow moving vehicles provided by SafeNY, a state traffic safety program. Contact information is provided in the Resource section of this plan. (*see appendix for sample SafeNY brochure*)

Recommendation 2

Develop Farmland Rental Network

Maximize the use of agricultural lands by developing a network of farmers and landowners to facilitate farmland rental. Educate non-farming owners of agricultural land about how rental agreements can work, how to become eligible for agricultural assessment and the paperwork necessary to qualify. Reach out to landowners who are not currently renting land to farmers, educate them, and invite them to join the network.

Recommendation 3

Maintain Agricultural Data at Town Level

Maintain accurate records of farmland acreage and agricultural activities and production in the town. Agriculture at the town level is not generally tracked and data is hard to come by. By maintaining its own database the town will be better positioned when it comes time to update this plan and for future land use planning.

E. Land in Transition

Recommendation 1

Market Town to Farmers

Develop a brochure and/or website that markets the Town of Seward as a good place to farm. If a farmer decides to sell his or her land, the best way to keep it in agriculture is to have another farmer buy it. A good example of a community that has done this is Jefferson County in northern New York and their *Come Farm With Us* website, www.comefarmwithus.com. (see appendix).

Recommendation 2

Provide Assistance to Farmers in Transition to Keep Land in Agriculture

Part of a traditionally strong dairy region, Seward has felt the impact of the latest crisis in milk prices. A significant amount of the farmland in Seward has been and continues to be in dairy production. The tenuous economic situation for dairy farms puts the town's farmland base at risk. Some dairy farmers may find it necessary to diversify or transition out of dairy entirely and the town needs to be prepared to support them during these transitions.

Some transitions may involve a change in ownership or management. The town should work closely with support networks such as Cornell University's FarmLink/FarmNet program to help farmers in need of special assistance and to match farmers interested in selling their land with farmers that are looking for land to purchase. See Resources page for contact information. (*Contact FarmLink/FarmNet and for suggestions on how municipal agriculture and farmland protection programs can work with them*)

Recommendation 3

Encourage Beginning Farmers

Create a mentoring program where experienced farmers can assist and guide new farmers. Collaborate with SUNY/Cobleskill and MADE in Schoharie County's livestock internship program (grassfedinterns.com) to match recent graduates of the University's School of Agriculture and Natural Resources with farmers in the town who are interested in mentoring an individual and perhaps transferring ownership over time. The New York Beginning Farmers Project, part of Cornell University is another resource to help new farmers. Contact information is provided on the Resource page.

F. Farmland Protection

Recommendation 1

Educate Landowners About Conservation Easements

Educate landowners about voluntarily placing conservation easements on their land. A conservation easement is a deed restriction landowners voluntarily place on their property to protect resources, natural areas or productive agricultural land. An easement on agricultural land is called an agricultural conservation easement. In general agricultural conservation easements limit non-farm development and activity. Most agricultural conservation easements are permanent and the restrictions travel with the deed to the land when it changes ownership. Landowners can sell or donate an easement to a qualified conservation organization or government body. The value of the easement is generally the monetary difference between the land's value for development and its value for agricultural use. Landowners who place easements on their land can receive various tax advantages.

Currently the federal government and NYSDAM's Farmland Protection Program offer funding on an application basis for purchase of development rights. Easements can also be donated to land conservation organizations such as the Schoharie Land Trust. More information on purchase of development rights is available in the appendix. (*AFT fact sheets, P4Ag Guide PDR chapter, FRPP info, SLT brochure*)

Recommendation 2

Research Viability of Lease of Development Rights Program

Conduct a review of other communities offering lease of development rights programs. Estimate how many landowners in town would be willing to participate in such a program. Analyze what the impact would be on the tax base and project how such a program would positively and negatively affect the Town of Seward.

Lease of development rights programs (LDR), also known as term conservation easement programs, provide incentives to landowners who voluntarily commit to keeping their land undeveloped for a agreed upon number of years. LDR programs are similar in concept to purchase of development rights programs but the incentives they offer are more modest because the commitment is not permanent.

In an LDR program a town can reduce property tax assessments for landowners willing to sign a temporary deed restriction that will be in place for a set number of years. LDR programs can help farmers maintain their land while stabilizing areas within the town, allowing the community time to develop longer-term farmland protection strategies. More information on LDR programs is available in the appendix. (*Planning For Ag Guide section on LDR*)

Recommendation 3

Review Plan Every Five Years

The town board should require a review of the agricultural and farmland protection plan every five years and update as needed.

Recommendation 4

Participate in Update of Schoharie County Plan

Participate in the updating of the Schoharie County agricultural and farmland protection plan.

Goal II

Foster Economic Opportunities for Agriculture

The best way to keep land in agriculture is to keep farms profitable. If people can make money from farming the incentive to sell land for development will be reduced.

Recommendation 1

Disseminate Information About Economic Opportunity

Collaborate with farmers and state and local agencies to share information and resources and provide support to farmers in the town. Develop a system to update farmers on developing markets for new products that can be produced in the town's region. Establish an information center at the town hall where materials on agricultural programs, issues and opportunities can be distributed.

Recommendation 2

Support Government Initiatives to Stabilize Milk Prices

Support efforts at the state and federal level to resolve issues concerning the pricing of fluid milk and other dairy commodities and support initiatives to provide economic support to dairy farmers.

Recommendation 3

Collaborate to Develop Regional Cooperative

Participate in the development of a regional cooperative of local farmers to market their products. Hire a centralized person to coordinate the sale of local agricultural products to urban markets as well as to institutions and other large volume purchasers. Collaborate with Schoharie County to research the availability of grant funding to finance market development for local agricultural products.

A. Livestock

Action i

Raise and Market Grassfed and Pastured Meats

Collaborate with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE), Schoharie County Planning Department Agency (SCPDA), MADE in Schoharie County and SUNY/Cobleskill to utilize the land base for production of crops to which it best suited and are most profitable as markets change. For example, enhance the developing grass-fed and/or pastured livestock initiative in Seward and Schoharie County as a whole. Dairy has long been the predominant form of agriculture in Seward because the land is well suited to producing hay and forage. These pastures and hayfields also lend themselves to raising livestock for meat.

The market for both grass-fed and pastured meat has been growing over the past several years and concerns regarding food safety appear to be accelerating the expansion of this market. Seward is well situated geographically to service this market, which exists primarily in urban and suburban areas such as the Greater Capital Region and the New York Metropolitan Area.

The development of this initiative should include a locally based USDA inspected livestock processing facility that can handle the anticipated volume. Currently a lack of slaughterhouses as well as limited of refrigeration capacity for hanging and storing meat is restricting the growth of pastured/grass fed meat production. Many farmers must transport their animals considerable distances for processing and must schedule their time slots as much as a year in advance. Until it becomes economically feasible for local facilities to be developed farmers could consider cooperating to truck livestock to processing facilities outside of the region.

Local slaughter initiatives have been undertaken in the past by SUNY/Cobleskill, which runs a meat lab for slaughtering and butchery instruction. A mobile slaughter unit has also been developed by a farmer in Carlisle and is used by several area livestock farmers.

Action ii

Take Advantage of Ethnic Markets

Cater to the ethnic market for live animals and on-farm butchering by the customer. Seward is within a relatively short driving distance of the Capital Region with excellent roads and direct routes making access easy for potential customers.

Live animal markets, such as Broadway Live Poultry Market in Schenectady, represent another potential outlet for livestock raised in Seward. There are approximately 90 live poultry markets in the New York Metropolitan Region with additional markets existing in New Jersey and New England. Many of these markets also sell goats, lamb and beef. Currently the Broadway Live Poultry Market buys its animals from a farm in Queens. These animals could be bought from local farms.

Farmers could cater to the food ways of diverse populations. One example of a growing market is the Guyanese population currently being cultivated by the City of Schenectady. Guyanese have been relocating to Schenectady from Queens. Several thousand Guyanese now reside in Schenectady. Growers could make connections with this community and grow the types of agricultural products they desire. The Guyanese diet includes a substantial amount of chicken as well as beef and pork. Sweet potatoes, pumpkins, garlic and sorrel are also agricultural products that can be grown in the region that are staples of the Guyanese diet. The Schenectady Greenmarket, located in downtown Schenectady is a good venue to trade with these customers. .

Action iii

Offer Horse Boarding

Develop a support network for farmers that either want to start up or convert part or all of their existing operation to horse boarding. Between second homeowners, students at SUNY/Cobleskill and horse enthusiasts in the Greater Capital/Saratoga Region, there is a market for farms that board horses. The recession has limited the ability of some horse owners to maintain their own barns and riding facilities and they are finding it more economical to board their horses and ride at the boarding facility. Horse care is a specialized skill that can be developed through education and experience. The town could establish an ad hoc equine committee to advise newcomers to this business about facilities, management and horse care standards.

B. Crops

Action i

Develop Local Value-Added Processing Infrastructure

Support the development of a value added processing facility in Schoharie County. Such a facility could enable farmers to produce value-added products to sell at area farm stands, and farmers markets as well as other regional retail outlets. Freezing or canning could provide locally produced foods outside of the growing season to retail outlets, restaurants, schools and other institutions. For example Farm 2 Table Co-Packers, located in Kingston, NY is a 20,000 square foot kitchen with a dedicated processing line, bakery and test kitchen with 8,000 feet of storage space for refrigerated, frozen and dry goods. Winter Sun, an associated farm, is a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) operation that freezes locally grown produce, which it makes available to its members outside of the growing season.

Action ii

Produce Custom Hay

Collaborate with the CCE and the county's agricultural marketing specialist to identify markets and pricing for hay customized to available high-end markets and recruit growers to produce it. Identify farmland that, if untreated with chemicals for a period of three years, could be converted into organic hay production.

C. Direct Marketing

Recommendation 1

Support Dairy Farmers Converting to Direct Marketing

Support the development of an initiative at the county and/or state level to assist dairy farmers in direct marketing. Some dairy farms in the region have begun to process their own milk and sell it directly to the consumer. Meadowbrook Farms in Albany County and Kings Brothers Dairy in Saratoga County are two examples. In addition to direct marketing milk some dairy farms are also making and selling other dairy products such as yogurt, cheese and ice cream.

Farmers who had transitioned into direct marketing before the fluid milk price dropped have been able to keep their price constant. Commodity dairy farmers suffering from the drop in milk prices are eyeing direct marketing as a means stabilizing their revenue. However, processing and direct marketing milk and dairy products is a complex undertaking that will require special assistance, training and ongoing support for the farmers involved.

Recommendation 2

Expand Area Farmers Markets

Expand area farmers markets. Collaborate with SCPDA to expand the Cobleskill farmers market so that it can attract a larger customer base and move more goods, providing revenue for a broader pool of farmers.

Recommendation 3

Sell Local Farm Products to Tourists

Collaborate with SCPDA to promote and market locally grown farm products through a farmers market and other farm oriented events at local tourist destinations such as Howe Caverns and the Iroquois Indian Museum. Some non-perishable farm products such as preserves, maple syrup and candy as well as beeswax items could also be sold in these destinations' gift shops. Foster the development of roadside stands along Route 20 to take advantage of tourist traffic to Cooperstown. People who travel this route regularly, as many do, will become repeat customers.

Recommendation 4

Encourage Farmers to Work Together to Participate in Urban Farmers Markets

Encourage farmers to participate in Greater Capital Region farmers markets as well as the Greenmarket in New York Metropolitan Area. Identify farmers who sell their products at farmers markets and wholesale to urban-based businesses such as restaurants and develop a transportation cooperative that would save on time and wear and tear on delivery vehicles.

Recommendation 5

Increase Rural Access to High Speed Internet

Town officials need to work with county, state and federal officials to make high-speed internet access available to farmers and individuals in rural settings. Farmers need high-speed internet access for many reasons. Farmers need to research farming techniques as well as shop online for competitively priced supplies. Farmers need to maintain contact with agricultural groups and associations that share knowledge and develop initiatives. Farmers need to be able to promote and market their products online and be able to interact online with their customers.

Recommendation 6

Support the Development of Community Supported Agriculture

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) has grown tremendously in popularity over the last 20 years. A farmer operating a CSA offers a certain number of shares of the produce the farm will produce in a given year for a fee. In exchange the shareholder will regularly receive quantities of seasonal goods produced on the farm. The CSA model allows the farmer, who receives the money at the beginning of the year, to make the capital investment necessary to produce the crops. CSAs contain an element of shared-risk which means that both the farmer and the consumer lose out in the case of the failure of a certain crop. However, the vast majority of CSAs produce a diverse number of crops throughout the growing season so the likelihood of total loss is remote. The town should support the development of CSAs in the region.

Goal III

Educate People About Agriculture

In the past an understanding of the basic concepts of agriculture was ingrained in the general public's outlook because the majority of people had some kind of background in farming. Today this is not the case. Non-farming members of the community may have little or no understanding of common agricultural practices. In order for farmers to continue normal operations and live in harmony with non-farming neighbors, residents must be educated about the types of agriculture occurring in their communities and the kinds of activities that they can expect to encounter.

Recommendation 1

Produce Brochure About Agriculture for Town Residents

Develop a brochure for non-farming residents explaining what types of agriculture exist in the town and what kinds of agricultural activities they may expect to encounter. Explain the benefits of agriculture to the community. Describe state and local regulations relating to agriculture such as the state's agricultural districts law and the town's right to farm law. Distribute this brochure to new and existing residents. A sample brochure from Washington County "*So You Want to Live in the Country*" appears in the appendix.

Recommendation 2

Educate Children in the Community About Agriculture

Collaborate with local school districts, 4H clubs and the Future Farmers of American (FFA) to educate children about agriculture in their community. Work with the Cobleskill Richmondville and Sharon Springs Central School Districts to create farm to school lunch programs paired with educational field trips to local farms. Children need to have a basic understanding of where their food comes from and how an agricultural community works. If children do not develop an interest in agriculture there will be no next generation capable of caring for the town's farmland.

Recommendation 3

Support Development of Social Network for Farmers

As farming has declined throughout the town the social fabric of the farming community has eroded. Create or revive a social group for farmers in the town such as the Grange. This social group can function as a support group for farmers facing challenges and can also aid in public education efforts. Such a community group could be bolstered by an online network or social media venue such as Facebook allowing farm families to stay connected.

Goal IV

Protect Natural Resources and Open Space

Recommendation 1

Work Together to Protect Water Quality

Water quality and availability are critical to the success of agriculture. The town should work with naturalists and geologists to identify, inventory, map and monitor the quality and quantity of water and other natural resources in the town. Maps should be generated that depict the soils, slopes, creeks, wetlands and karst areas in the towns.

Recommendation 2

Help Farmers Take Advantage of Natural Resources Conservation Programs

Educate farmers about federal and state natural resource conservation programs they are eligible to participate in that offer financial aid and/or tax incentives to help farmers protect the environment. Some examples of such programs are: Conservation Reserve Program; Federal Wetlands Program, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, Debt for Nature; Grassland Reserve Program; Landowner incentive program; Wetlands Reserve Program; Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program. These programs are described in the *New York Agricultural Landowner Guide* included in the appendix.

Recommendation 3

Research Opportunities For On Farm Production of Renewable Energy

Explore possibilities for farm production of renewable energy both for on-farm use and for environmental markets.

Recommendation 4

Produce Biofuel

Collaborate with CCE and SCPDA to research how Seward could best meet the needs of the market for biofuels. Local biofuel businesses exist (Albany Renewable Energy, Empire State Ethanol and Energy, new business at former Blue Seal feed mill) and are planning expansions. Find out what products they need in what quantities. Make this information available to farmers.

An increasing number of farmers and agricultural landowners are interested in opportunities to generate renewable energy as a means of reducing business costs, diversifying their income sources and enhancing the environmental sustainability of their businesses. Other farmers are interested in reducing energy consumption or participating in emerging environmental markets such as carbon trading. There are many financial incentives and state and federal programs designed to help farmers tap into new environmental market and energy opportunities.

Resources

American Farmland Trust

(518) 581-0078

www.farmland.org/newyork

Association of Towns of the State of New York

(518) 465-7933

www.nytowns.org

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie County

(518) 234-4303

<http://cceschoharie.org/>

Land Trust Alliance

(518) 587-0774

<http://www.landtrustalliance.org/community/northeast>

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets

Agriculture Protection Unit (518) 457-2713

Agricultural Districts Law: www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/agdistricts.html

Agricultural and Farmland Protection Program: www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AP/agservices/farmprotect.html

NYS Energy Research and Development Authority

(518) 862-1090

www.nyserda.org

NYS Department of State

(518) 474-4752

www.dos.state.ny.us

New York Farm Bureau

(518) 436-8495

www.nyfb.org

New York FarmNet/FarmLink

(800) 547-3276

www.nyfarmnet.org

New York Planning Federation

(518) 270-9855

www.nypf.org

Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency

(518) 234-3751

<http://www.schohariecounty-ny.gov/CountyWebSite/Planning/planninghome.jsp>

Schoharie Land Trust

(607) 652-2162

www.schoharielandtrust.org

SUNY Cobleskill

(518) 255-5700

www.cobleskill.edu

Appendices

B. Interview Summary

C. Input from Public Meetings

D. SWOT Analysis

E. Comprehensive Land Use Plan Survey Analysis

F. NYSDAM Definition of Agriculture

G. Soil Definitions

H. Agricultural Statistics Worksheet

I. Review of Town of Seward Land Use Regulations

J. Sample Brochure for New Residents

K. New York Agricultural Landowner Guide



Summary of Interviews with Farmers and Owners of Agricultural Land *Town of Seward*

Background

This summary of perspectives on agriculture in the Town of Seward is based on interviews with 10 farmers and owners of farmland conducted by Laura Ten Eyck, field consultant for American Farmland Trust. The interviews took place during the winter and early spring of 2009.

The interviews were undertaken as part of the development of the Town of Seward's Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. This research was intended to document opinions of farmers and rural landowners about the state of agriculture within Seward and opportunities and challenges facing local farmers. In addition, a series of agricultural and farmland protection tools were discussed including agricultural assessment, land use regulation and conservation easements. Also discussed were issues such as farm profitability, property taxes, and residential development in agricultural areas.

Economic Impact of Agriculture

Seward is a farming town with a few very small residential hamlets. The entire Town of Seward is located within an agricultural district. The town has very little industry other than agriculture and few retail businesses. The majority of the money generated by business in the town is brought in by agriculture. The economic impact of agriculture on other businesses is limited in the Town of Seward due to the lack of supporting agribusinesses in the town but is significant at the county level as Seward farmers do make many purchases within the county. As one dairy farmer suggested:

"Because the county has no milk processing plant, milk produced on local farms leaves the county and goes elsewhere. The money that comes to us in payment for the milk we produce is generated somewhere else. If this farm wasn't here the \$250,000 in gross revenue it generates would not come here. Once I get the money I need to buy things. Most of what I buy, such as grain and services, comes from within the county. The dollar moves around three or four times. If I wasn't here the dollar would never come here. Farms generate a lot of money. Money wouldn't come here if we didn't have cows and sell milk."

- Quote from a Town of Seward Dairy Farmer

Whether or not the existing dairy farms will be able to weather the crisis in milk prices remains to be seen. "Dairymen are really getting hammered hard," observed a farmer. "At the beginning of the year the price was strong. The farmer felt good for once," said another dairy farmer regarding the economic conditions for dairy farmers in last year. "Then input costs skyrocketed. The good price got chewed up by cost. Now milk is going to very low prices and input costs have not come down enough. It is hard to manage a business when those kinds of forces are thrown at you all at once. Something needs to be done. I don't have the answer. The economics of farming needs to be better all across the country, not just in my little town."

But the outlook for dairy farms at the time the interviews were conducted was guardedly optimistic. “The farm is going to struggle to pay the bills this year. It is as simple as that,” confided a dairy farmer. “There are not a lot of dairies in this town but in the last few years they’ve held their own. We’ve actually gained a couple of farms—young fellows that decided they want to make a go of it, but it is a tough business.”

Loss of Farmland to Residential Development

“Farmland is being lost in small increments to residential development,” observed one owner of agricultural land. He purchased his land from a farmer who went out of business as a retreat for his family and now rents to a neighboring organic crop farmer. “When the economy improves more and more people will be buying farmland for recreation, second homes and hobby farms.”

“We continue to see development,” said a farmer. “It has slowed down a lot. Whether it will pick up again depends on how long it takes for this economic mess to clear up. It could take five years.” When farms go out of business the land is often bought and subdivided by developers in Cobleskill who then market the property downstate.

“Ten years ago it wasn’t unheard of to get more for a place than you were asking because people from the city would fight over it,” recalled an individual who owns agricultural land and rents to a farmer. “Realtors advertise stuff down in the city because they know that is where the money is. A lot of people down there, like let’s say a cop or a municipal worker, they work 20 years and retire. They take the money they made and move up here. It only makes sense to retire and move up here and buy a farmhouse and a barn on a bunch of land. For the same money you could buy basically nothing down there.”

Taxes

Although it was initially believed that residential development would lower taxes for rural landowners by increasing the tax base this is not believed to have happened. The new residents, coming from a more urban area, are accustomed to a higher level of services and expect this from the town.

“I remember when all these houses started going in around here they said ‘It’s increasing the tax base. Your taxes are going to go down.’ Of course it never happened,” said one landowner. “Then they said ‘You should be happy because the value of your property is going up.’ But for me personally, when I used to be able to look out the window and see just that one farmhouse, to me that was more valuable. Now I look out that window and see houses scattered everywhere.”

Homes in remote and scenic locations increase road maintenance expenses. “This road used to be seasonal,” said a farmer of the road he lives on. “Now there are six to eight houses on it and the town has got to keep it open year-round.” And more residential development means more traffic. “There used to be five cars a day going down this road,” said another farmer. “Now I can’t even back out of the driveway.” School taxes are also on the rise. “Everything at the school has to be new,” complained a farmer who both owns and rents land. “Half the kids can’t read and write but they have to have a tennis court and a big lunch room. Why should an 80-year-old couple have to pay taxes through the nose so that someone who moves up from the city’s kids can play tennis?”

Farmers and rural landowners feel that high taxes are the biggest challenge they face when it comes to hanging on to their land and making their farms profitable. “I will say that our taxes—school, county, town—are a drastic hit, even with the agricultural assessment, the Star Program and everything else,” said one farmer. “Our taxes have gone up 30 to 40 percent in the four- and-a-half years that we have been here and paid taxes. In my view that is the single most detrimental factor to our business. Instead of being able to buy more steers, chickens or hay we have to have the money to pay taxes. They say they are going up more next year. The taxes

would be the one thing that would make us move out of this state. That is the main thing they have to do something about.”

“If farmers can’t make a living they are going to sell,” said another farmer. “You can’t blame them. They can bust their ass on the farm or they can make a million bucks. What would you do?” And as farmers do sell out, more farmland gets sold for residential development, bringing in more people and raising taxes further.

“They call it progress but we are going backwards, not forwards,” said a rural landowner. “If you think progress is selling more land for development you are wrong. The more development you have the more money it is going to cost. I don’t care what happens: you get more, you pay more.”

Retirement and the Next Generation

Difficult economic circumstances often make it impossible for farmers and landowners to pass down land that has been in their families for generations to their children. One farmer said, “My kids would like to see this land stay the way it is and not get broken up but as time goes on eventually someone is going to own it who can’t afford to keep it together and that will probably be my kids. I don’t feel good about that. It makes me feel like I let my grandparents down somehow.”

“We farmers work all of our lives,” said another farmer. “We don’t have a 401K and investments in the stock market. Our money is in our property. All of our profits have gone into improving the farmstead. There may come a time when the farmer can’t pass the land on to the next generation. When I can’t farm anymore I want to live comfortably. I don’t want to be a ward of the state. I’m going to have to sell my property.”

Local Foods & Tourism

Some younger farmers have purchased land in Seward from retiring farmers and begun farming themselves, marketing their products directly to consumers through Community Supported Agriculture farms (CSAs) and farmers markets. The market for locally produced food is on the rise. “There is a willingness,” said one farmer. “Consumers want to buy local if they can.” The town has good proximity to markets in Cobleskill, Cooperstown and the Capital District as well as New York City. The town itself is extremely scenic and providing that it does not give way to over-development and its pastures don’t grow up into weeds it has potential as a tourist destination in its own right. “People don’t go to places like Schoharie County or Vermont to see brush,” observed a retired farmer.

“It is a viable area for tourism,” said one town resident retired from the tourist trade. “But I’m not sure there is enough cooperation among various groups. The ideal situation is to pool your money—get people to come and then keep them around for awhile so they spend their money here instead of somewhere else.”

Hunting and snow-mobiling are popular forms of recreation for both town residents and tourists. Many farmers and landowners believe the loss of hunting grounds to be a serious consequence of residential development. Farmers and landowners hunt themselves and also allow other hunters the privilege of hunting on their property. The local snowmobile club maintains extensive, marked trails throughout the town, many of which cross farmland. The club seeks annual permission from the landowners to allow the trail to cross their property. Club members hold an annual summer barbecue for the landowners to show their appreciation. All the farmers and landowners interviewed for this summary viewed the snow-mobilers in a very positive light.

Farmland Protection

Most farmers feel the town government cares a lot about agriculture. As one farmer indicated:

“The town is very supportive of farming. I don’t see that changing. The majority of the people in town are not farmers but many on the town boards used to be farmers, or are farmers, and the new people seem to be supportive of that.”

- Quote from a Town of Seward Farmer

Some farmers believe that the town’s land use regulations are too strict and limit their options for what they can do with their land. “Seward is very strict on zoning. They have gone overboard,” said one farmer. “I know a realtor who says Seward is the worst place you can be for zoning.” There are also concerns that the town government may be inflexible. “I’m afraid we will get people appointed to boards who have lived here a long time and don’t want change. That is the type of person that gets appointed to boards. I think they should be elected. There should be more opinions. People should be allowed to vote.”

There is some interest in farmland preservation through agricultural conservation easements among the farmers and rural landowners in the Town of Seward but they have concerns about state funding as well as the future of the protected land. “If people want to preserve land someone is going to have to spend some money,” said one farmer. “Great ideas take money. The State Department of Agriculture and Markets’ Farmland Protection Program didn’t have enough money to begin with and now the governor wants to cut it by 40 percent.”

“The permanent sale of development rights may work for a farmer for a year,” observed one farmer. “But in 25 years they still own the land and they can’t do anything with it. They are stuck paying taxes on it. To me a term easement is wiser than the outright purchase of development rights.”

Farmers do feel that the high quality of the farmland in certain parts of the town combined with its likelihood of being developed is enough to justify some form of protection. They believe other farmland does not need protection because it is unlikely to be developed. “What would make sense would be for the town to set aside a few farms worthy of preservation that are good to build on. That makes sense to me.” said one farmer. “If they don’t get protected, when a farmer quits a developer will buy the land and subdivide it to make money. Next thing you know you have missed an opportunity.”

In general, farmers believe that the fate of the farms in town will be decided by economic conditions as well as national and state policy decisions that are beyond the town’s control. “I think the government has got its hands too deep into everything for us to be able to do much at this level,” said one rural landowner. However farmers acknowledge that it is important for the town to ensure farmers the flexibility they need in order to stay in business during tough economic times. “The town does as much as it can to help farmers,” said one farmer. “It doesn’t want to be the straw that breaks the camel’s back.”

Seward SWOT Analysis

Public Meeting

3/23/09

Seward/Carlisle Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan

Strengths

Diversity

Jobs

Quality of life

Recreation

Attractive place for people who telecommute

Multigenerational farms, farms passed down in family and kept active

Have choices for purchasing local food

Hay

Good quality soils

People like to live near farm animals

Weaknesses

Taxes too high (also high taxes discourage people who want to move into town)

Have to travel distance for parts and service (farm equipment, milking equipment)

Soil types conducive to forage, not vegetable production

Available land is spread out, have to travel good distances on roads

Weather

Danger of traveling on roads with slow moving farm equipment

Opportunities

Direct marketing, local foods

More opportunity for slaughterhouse, (quality issues, getting own meat back, hanging long enough)

Need to give more opportunity to existing farmers

Minimize red tape with animals

Need for people to eat

Local farmers sharing equipment (controversial)

Niche markets, alpaca, sheep

Threats

Taxes

Realtors, subdivisions

Sprawl

Prices of agricultural products set below the cost of production

Regulation

Competition on price with products from other countries

Farmers are independent, not easy to get them together on issues

Increase in cost of living

Appendix F.

New York State Legal Definitions Relating to Agriculture

§ 301. Definitions. When used in this article:

1. "Agricultural assessment value" means the value per acre assigned to land for assessment purposes determined pursuant to the capitalized value of production procedure prescribed by section three hundred four-a of this article.
2. "Crops, livestock and livestock products" shall include but not be limited to the following:
 - a. Field crops, including corn, wheat, oats, rye, barley, hay, potatoes and dry beans.
 - b. Fruits, including apples, peaches, grapes, cherries and berries.
 - c. Vegetables, including tomatoes, snap beans, cabbage, carrots, beets and onions.
 - d. Horticultural specialties, including nursery stock, ornamental shrubs, ornamental trees and flowers.
 - e. Livestock and livestock products, including cattle, sheep, hogs, Goats, horses, poultry, ratites, such as ostriches, emus, rheas and kiwis, farmed deer, farmed buffalo, fur bearing animals, wool bearing animals, such as alpacas and llamas, milk, eggs and furs.
 - f. Maple sap.
 - g. Christmas trees derived from a managed Christmas tree operation whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump.
 - h. Aquaculture products, including fish, fish products, water plants and shellfish.
 - i. Woody biomass, which means short rotation woody crops raised for bioenergy, and shall not include farm woodland.
 - j. Apiary products, including honey, beeswax, royal jelly, bee pollen, propolis, package bees, nucs and queens. For the purposes of this paragraph, "nucs" shall mean small honey bee colonies created from larger colonies including the nuc box, which is a smaller version of a beehive, designed to hold up to five frames from an existing colony.
3. "Farm woodland" means land used for the production for sale of woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood. Farm woodland shall not include land used to produce Christmas trees or land used for the processing or retail merchandising of woodland products.
4. "Land used in agricultural production" means not less than seven acres of land used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more; or, not less than seven acres of land used in the preceding two years to support a commercial horse boarding operation with annual gross receipts of ten thousand dollars or more. Land used in agricultural production shall not include land or portions thereof used for processing or retail merchandising of such crops, livestock or livestock products. Land used in agricultural production shall also include:
 - a. Rented land which otherwise satisfies the requirements for eligibility for an agricultural assessment.
 - a-1. Land used by a not-for-profit institution for the purposes of agricultural research that is intended to improve the quality or quantity of crops, livestock or livestock products. Such land shall qualify for an agricultural assessment upon application made pursuant to paragraph (a) of subdivision one of section three hundred five of this article, except that no minimum gross sales value shall be required.

- b. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products, exclusive of woodland products, which does not independently satisfy the gross sales value requirement, where such land was used in such production for the preceding two years and currently is being so used under a written rental arrangement of five or more years in conjunction with land which is eligible for an agricultural assessment.
- c. Land used in support of a farm operation or land used in agricultural production, constituting a portion of a parcel, as identified on the assessment roll, which also contains land qualified for an agricultural assessment.
- d. Farm woodland which is part of land which is qualified for an agricultural assessment, provided, however, that such farm woodland attributable to any separately described and assessed parcel shall not exceed fifty acres.
- e. Land set aside through participation in a federal conservation program pursuant to title one of the federal food security act of nineteen hundred eighty-five or any subsequent federal programs established for the purposes of replenishing highly erodible land which has been depleted by continuous tilling or reducing national surpluses of agricultural commodities and such land shall qualify for agricultural assessment upon application made pursuant to paragraph a of subdivision one of section three hundred five of this article, except that no minimum gross sales value shall be required.
- f. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more, or land of less than seven acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of fifty thousand dollars or more.
- g. Land under a structure within which crops, livestock or livestock products are produced, provided that the sales of such crops, livestock or livestock products meet the gross sales requirements of paragraph f of this subdivision.
- h. Land that is owned or rented by a farm operation in its first or second year of agricultural production, or, in the case of a commercial horse boarding operation in its first or second year of operation, that consists of (1) not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an annual gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more; or (2) less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an annual gross sales value of fifty thousand dollars or more; or (3) land situated under a structure within which crops, livestock or livestock products are produced, provided that such crops, livestock or livestock products have an annual gross sales value of (i) ten thousand dollars or more, if the farm operation uses seven or more acres in agricultural production, or (ii) fifty thousand dollars or more, if the farm operation uses less than seven acres in agricultural production; or (4) not less than seven acres used as a single operation to support a commercial horse boarding operation with annual gross receipts of ten thousand dollars or more.
- i. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production for sale of orchard or vineyard crops when such land is used solely for the purpose of planting a new orchard or vineyard and when such land is also owned or rented by a newly established farm operation in its first, second, third or fourth year of agricultural production.
- j. Land of not less than seven acres used as a single operation for the production and sale of Christmas trees when such land is used solely

for the purpose of planting Christmas trees that will be made available for sale, whether dug for transplanting or cut from the stump and when such land is owned or rented by a newly established farm operation in its first, second, third, fourth or fifth year of agricultural production.

k. Land used to support an apiary products operation which is owned by the operation and consists of (i) not less than seven acres nor more than ten acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more or (ii) less than seven acres used as a single operation in the preceding two years for the production for sale of crops, livestock or livestock products of an average gross sales value of fifty thousand dollars or more. The land used to support an apiary products operation shall include, but not be limited to, the land under a structure within which apiary products are produced, harvested and stored for sale; and a buffer area maintained by the operation between the operation and adjacent landowners. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subdivision, rented land associated with an apiary products operation is not eligible for an agricultural assessment based on this paragraph.

5. "Oil, gas or wind exploration, development or extraction activities" means the installation and use of fixtures and equipment which are necessary for the exploration, development or extraction of oil, natural gas or wind energy, including access roads, drilling apparatus, pumping facilities, pipelines, and wind turbines.

6. "Unique and irreplaceable agricultural land" means land which is uniquely suited for the production of high value crops, including, but not limited to fruits, vegetables and horticultural specialties.

7. "Viable agricultural land" means land highly suitable for agricultural production and which will continue to be economically feasible for such use if real property taxes, farm use restrictions, and speculative activities are limited to levels approximating those in commercial agricultural areas not influenced by the proximity of non-agricultural development.

8. "Conversion" means an outward or affirmative act changing the use of agricultural land and shall not mean the nonuse or idling of such land.

9. "Gross sales value" means the proceeds from the sale of:

a. Crops, livestock and livestock products produced on land used in agricultural production provided, however, that whenever a crop is processed before sale, the proceeds shall be based upon the market value of such crop in its unprocessed state;

b. Woodland products from farm woodland eligible to receive an agricultural assessment, not to exceed two thousand dollars annually;

c. Honey and beeswax produced by bees in hives located on an otherwise qualified farm operation but which does not independently satisfy the gross sales requirement;

d. Maple syrup processed from maple sap produced on land used in agricultural production in conjunction with the same or an otherwise qualified farm operation;

e. Or payments received by reason of land set aside pursuant to paragraph e of subdivision four of this section;

f. Or payments received by thoroughbred breeders pursuant to section two hundred fifty-four of the racing, pari-mutuel wagering and breeding law; and

g. Compost, mulch or other organic biomass crops as defined in subdivision sixteen of this section produced on land used in agricultural production, not to exceed five thousand dollars annually.

11. "Farm operation" means the land and on-farm buildings, equipment, manure processing and handling facilities, and practices which

contribute to the production, preparation and marketing of crops, livestock and livestock products as a commercial enterprise, including a "commercial horse boarding operation" as defined in subdivision thirteen of this section, "timber processing" as defined in subdivision fourteen of this section and "compost, mulch or other biomass crops" as defined in subdivision sixteen of this section. For purposes of this section, such farm operation shall also include the production, management and harvesting of "farm woodland", as defined in subdivision three of this section. Such farm operation may consist of one or more parcels of owned or rented land, which parcels may be contiguous or noncontiguous to each other.

12. "Agricultural data statement" means an identification of farm operations within an agricultural district located within five hundred feet of the boundary of property upon which an action requiring municipal review and approval by the planning board, zoning board of appeals, town board, or village board of trustees pursuant to article sixteen of the town law or article seven of the village law is proposed, as provided in section three hundred five-a of this article.

13. "Commercial horse boarding operation" means an agricultural enterprise, consisting of at least seven acres and boarding at least ten horses, regardless of ownership, that receives ten thousand dollars or more in gross receipts annually from fees generated either through the boarding of horses or through the production for sale of crops, livestock, and livestock products, or through both such boarding and such production. Under no circumstances shall this subdivision be construed to include operations whose primary on site function is horse racing. Notwithstanding any other provision of this subdivision, a commercial horse boarding operation that is proposed or in its first or second year of operation may qualify as a farm operation if it is an agricultural enterprise, consisting of at least seven acres, and boarding at least ten horses, regardless of ownership, by the end of the first year of operation.

14. "Timber processing" means the on-farm processing of timber grown on a farm operation into woodland products, including but not limited to logs, lumber, posts and firewood, through the use of a readily moveable, nonpermanent saw mill, provided that such farm operation consists of at least seven acres and produces for sale crops, livestock or livestock products of an annual gross sales value of ten thousand dollars or more and that the annual gross sales value of such processed woodland products does not exceed the annual gross sales value of such crops, livestock or livestock products.

15. "Agricultural tourism" means activities conducted by a farmer on-farm for the enjoyment or education of the public, which primarily promote the sale, marketing, production, harvesting or use of the products of the farm and enhance the public's understanding and awareness of farming and farm life.

* 16. "Apiary products operation" means an agricultural enterprise, consisting of land owned by the operation, upon which bee hives are located and maintained for the purpose of producing, harvesting and storing apiary products for sale.

* NB There are 2 sb 16's

* 16. "Compost, mulch or other organic biomass crops" means the on-farm processing, mixing, handling or marketing of organic matter that is grown or produced by such farm operation to rid such farm operation of its excess agricultural waste; and the on-farm processing, mixing or handling of off-farm generated organic matter that is transported to such farm operation and is necessary to facilitate the composting of such farm operation's agricultural waste. This shall also include the on-farm processing, mixing or handling of off-farm generated organic matter for use only on that farm operation. Such organic matter shall

include, but not be limited to, manure, hay, leaves, yard waste, silage, organic farm waste, vegetation, wood biomass or by-products of agricultural products that have been processed on such farm operation. The resulting products shall be converted into compost, mulch or other organic biomass crops that can be used as fertilizers, soil enhancers or supplements, or bedding materials. For purposes of this section, "compost" shall be processed by the aerobic, thermophilic decomposition of solid organic constituents of solid waste to produce a stable, humus-like material.

Soil Definitions

Source: National Resource Conservation Service – National Soil Survey Handbook (NRCS-NSSH; Part 622 / NRCS Soils; Part 657.5 Identification of Important Farmlands)

- (1) Prime Farmland is land that has the best combination of physical and chemical characteristics for producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops, and is also available for these uses (the land could be cropland, pastureland, rangeland, forest land, or other land, but not urban built-up land or water). It has the soil quality, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high yields of crops when treated and managed, including water management, according to acceptable

farming methods. In general, prime farmlands have an adequate and dependable water supply from precipitation or irrigation, a favorable temperature and growing season, acceptable acidity or alkalinity, acceptable salt and sodium content, and few or no rocks. They are permeable to water and air. Prime farmlands are not excessively erodible or saturated with water for a long period of time, and they either do not flood frequently or are protected from flooding. Examples of soils that qualify as prime farmland are Palouse silt loam, 0 to 7 percent slopes; Brookston silty clay loam, drained; and Tama silty clay loam, 0 to 5 percent slopes. (Unique farmland is land other than prime farmland that is used for the production of specific high value food and fiber crops. It has the special combination of soil quality, location, growing season, and moisture supply needed to economically produce sustained high quality and/or high yields of a specific crop when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Examples of such crops are citrus, tree nuts, olives, cranberries, fruit, and vegetables.)

- (2) (Additional) Farmland of Statewide Importance is land, in addition to prime and unique farmlands that is of statewide importance for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oil seed crops. Criteria for defining and delineating this land are to be determined by the appropriate state agency or agencies. Generally, additional farmlands of statewide importance include those that are nearly prime farmland and that economically produce high yields of crops when treated and managed according to acceptable farming methods. Some may produce as high a yield as prime farmlands if conditions are favorable. In some states, additional farmlands of statewide importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by state law.
- (3) (Additional) Farmland of Local Importance. In some local areas, there is concern for certain additional farmlands for the production of food, feed, fiber, forage, and oilseed crops, even though these lands are not identified as having national or statewide importance. Where appropriate, these lands are to be identified by the local agency or agencies concerned. In places, additional farmlands of local importance may include tracts of land that have been designated for agriculture by local ordinance.

TOWN OF SEWARD SURVEY

1. Based upon the accompanying map, in which “neighborhood” do you live? *[Check one]*

- ① Area 1 – Residential A: 82
- ② Area 2 – Residential B: 55
- ③ Area 3 – Open Space A: 22
- ④ Area 4 – Open Space B: 26
- ⑤ Area 5 – Open Space C: 39
- ⑥ Area 6 – Residential/Agriculture A: 67
- ⑦ Area 7 – Residential/Agriculture B: 56
- ⑧ Area 8 – Residential/Agriculture C: 23
- No Reply: 32
- Improper Response: 3

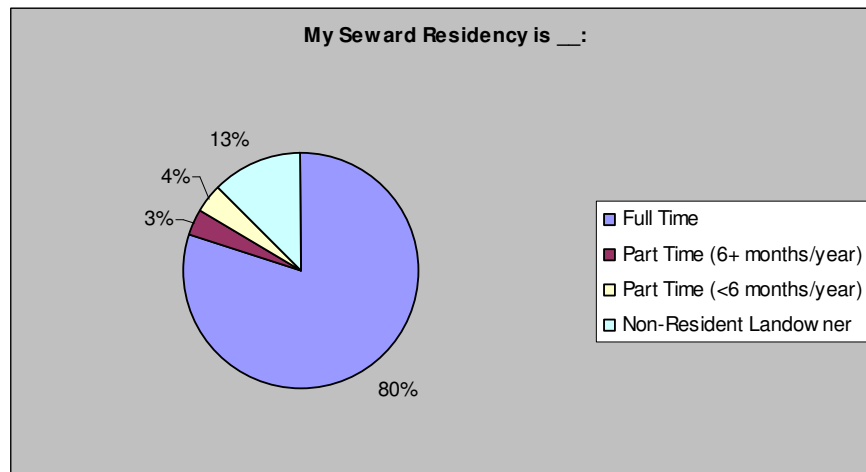
2. Are you currently a legal (voting) resident of the Town of Seward? *[Check one]*

- ① Yes: 297 ② No: 89 No Reply: 19

3. Are you the primary resident? **[Check one]** ① Yes: 328 ② No: 46 No Reply: 31

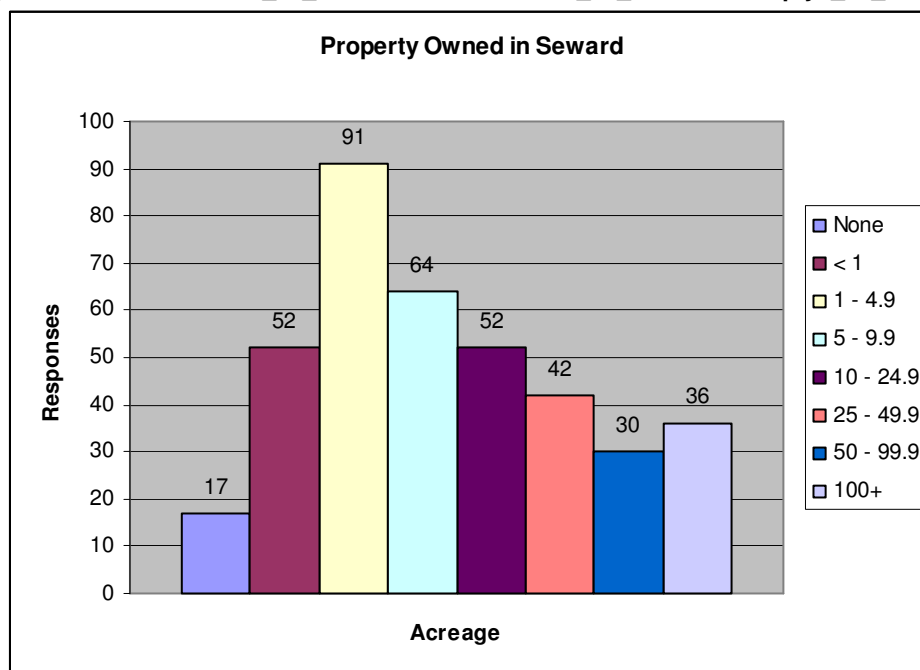
4. Are you **[Check one]**;

① a full time resident: 305 ② a part time resident (6 or more months a year): 13
 ③ a part time resident (less than 6 months a year): 15 ④ non-resident landowner: 48 No Reply: 22



5. How much property do you own in the Town of Seward? **[Check total for all parcels]**

① None: 17 ② Less than one acre: 52 ③ 1 to 4.9 acres: 91 ④ 5 to 9.9 acres: 64 ⑤ 10 to 24.9 acres: 52 ⑥ 25 to 49.9 acres: 42 ⑦ 50 to 99.9 acres: 30 ⑧ 100 acres or more: 36 No Reply: 21



6. Do you maintain your Legal Residency in the Town of Seward? (*Legal residency is defined by where you vote*) **[Check one]**

① Yes: 302 ② No: 81 No Reply: 22

If yes - a. Do you own or rent your in-town residence? [Check one]

① Own: 299 ② Rent: 11 No Reply: 93 Improper Response: 2

If no - b. Where do you maintain your Legal Residency? [Check one]

① Elsewhere in Schoharie County: 20 ② Elsewhere in New York State: 37

③ Outside of New York State: 19 No Response: 329

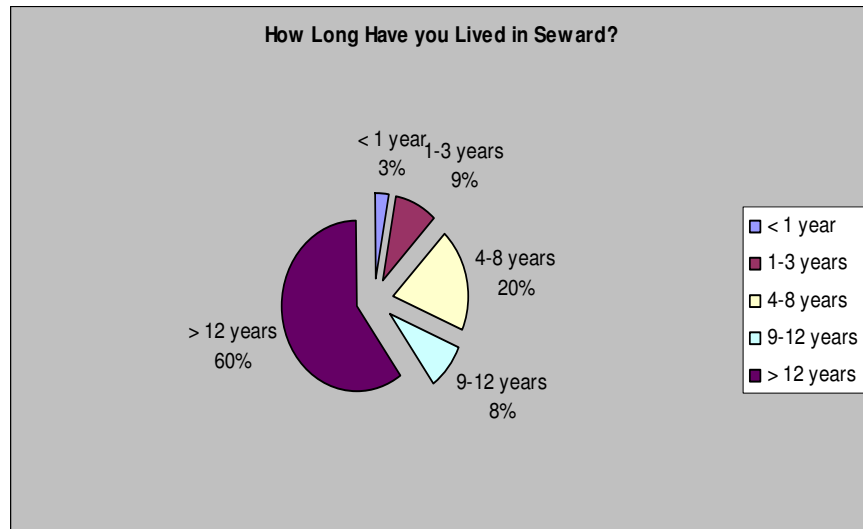
Fill-in Answers (number of answers in parenthesis): Bronx, Canajoharie, Carlisle, Florida (5), New Hampshire, New Jersey (7), North Carolina, Orange County, Pennsylvania, Sharon Springs, South Carolina (2), Texas, Suffolk County, Westchester County

7. How long have you resided at your current address? **[Check one]**

① For the past year: 15 ② For the past 1-3 years: 38 ③ For the past 4 to 8 years: 74 ④ For the past 9 to 12 years: 30 ⑤ or, For more than a dozen years: 225 No Response: 22

8. How long have you resided in the town of Seward? **[Check one]**

① For the past year: 11 ② For the past 1-3 years : 32 ③ For the past 4 to 8 years: 70
④ For the past 9 to 12 years: 29 ⑤ For more than a dozen years: 213 No Response: 50



9. Other than your residence, do you own property in the Town of Seward? **[Check one]** ① Yes: 117 ② No: 274

If yes check all that apply to other properties you own

③ Seasonal residence for myself: 15 ④ Residential Property for rent by others: 6 ⑤ Commercial property: 1
⑥ Agricultural property: 47 ⑦ Other residential property: 2 ⑧ Vacant land: 56

10. How has zoning in the Town of Seward impacted you?

① Positively: 38 ② Negatively: 70 ③ No significant impact: 260

Comments: Attached

11. How important are land use issues to you?

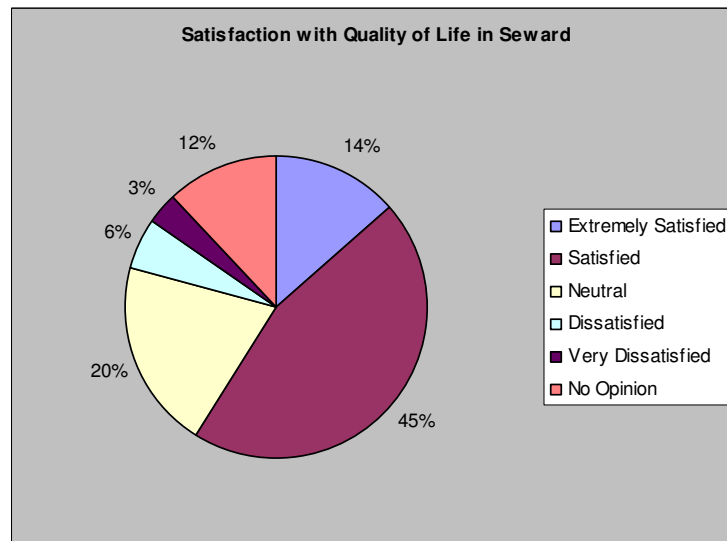
① Important: 328 ② Not important: 14 ③ Not sure: 54

12. In your opinion the current land use regulations adopted by the Town are:

① Too restrictive: 87 ② About right: 107 ③ Not restrictive enough: 23 ④ Not sure: 167

13. How satisfied are you with the quality of life in the Town of Seward today? **[Check one]**

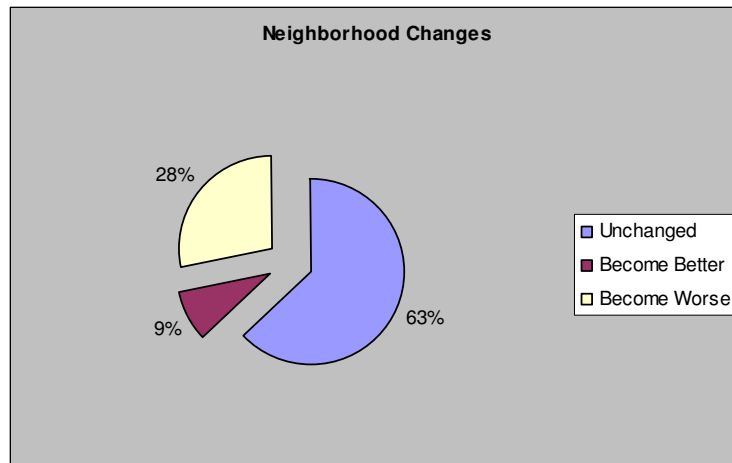
① Extremely satisfied; 53 ② Satisfied: 176 ③ Neutral: 78 ④ Dissatisfied: 22 ⑤ Very dissatisfied: 13 ⑥ Not sure or no opinion: 46 No Reply: 13



14. During the time you have lived in Seward, has your neighborhood changed?

① Remained more-or-less unchanged: 225 ② Become better: 32 or ③ Become worse: 102

Comments: Attached



15. Are there historic sites, natural or unique environmental areas, or scenic views which should be protected, particular roads or areas in the Town of Seward? ① Yes: 156 ② No: 157 No Reply: 76

Comments: Attached

16. Should the cost of public improvements and services be considered by the Town, at the developers expense, when reviewing proposed developments? ① Yes: 331 ② No: 35 No Reply: 30

17. Are there particular roads or areas in the Town of Seward that stand out in your mind as being especially attractive to the community? ① Yes: 131 ② No: 207 No Reply: 58

Comments: Attached

18. Are there particular roads or areas in the Town of Seward that stand out in your mind as being especially unattractive to the community? ① Yes: 104 ② No: 228 No Reply: 65

Comments: Attached

19. How would you like land use in your immediate Seward neighborhood to develop as? **[Check top 3 choices]**

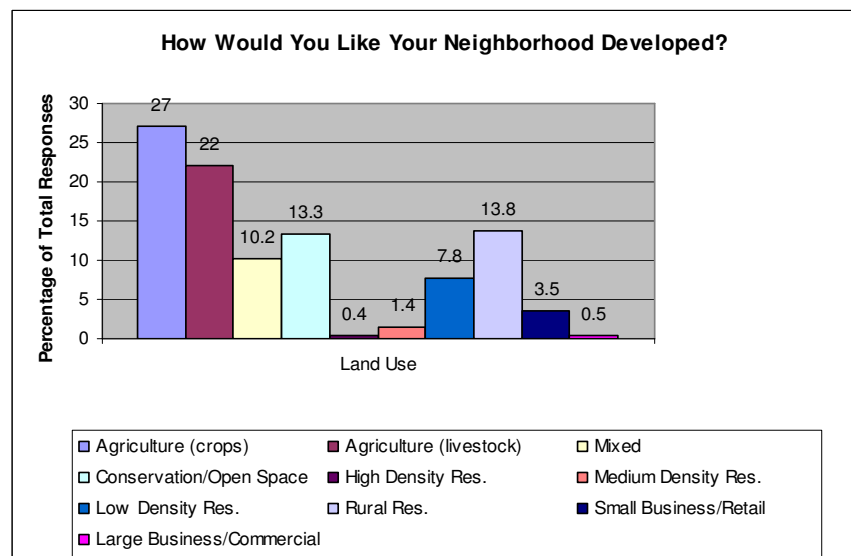
① Agricultural **[Cropland]**: 286 ② Agricultural **[Livestock]**: 233 ③ Mixed: 108

④ Conservation or open land reservation: 141 ⑤ High Density Residential: 4

⑥ Medium Density Residential: 15 ⑦ Low Density Residential: 83

⑧ Rural Residential: 146 ⑨ Small Business/Commercial/Retail: 37 ⑩ Large Business/Commercial: 5

No Response: 21

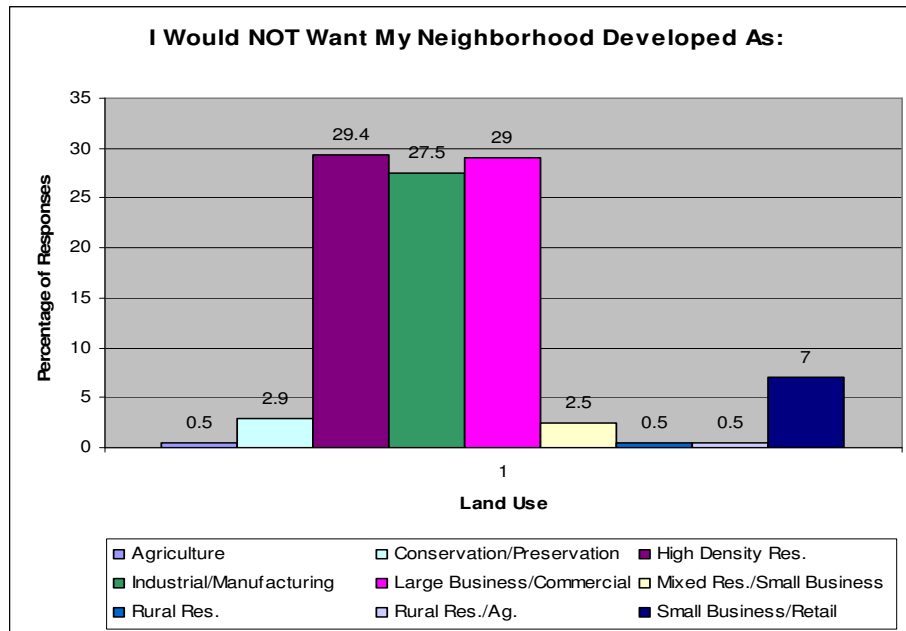


20. I would like to see the land use in my immediate neighborhood developed as **[Check top 3 choices]**:

① Agricultural: 283 ② Conservation or Preservation: 180 ③ High Density Residential: 7
 ④ Industrial or manufacturing: 2 ⑤ Large business, commercial or retail use: 2
 ⑥ Mixed residential and small business: 85 ⑦ Rural residential: 144 ⑧ Rural residential and ag: 160
 ⑨ Small business, commercial, and retail: 52 No Response: 13

21. I would **NOT** like to see the land use in my immediate neighborhood developed as **(Check top 3 choices)**:

① Agricultural: 6 ② Conservation or Preservation: 32 ③ High Density Residential: 321
 ④ Industrial or manufacturing: 301 ⑤ Large business, commercial or retail use: 317
 ⑥ Mixed residential and small business: 27 ⑦ Rural residential: 6 ⑧ Rural residential and agricultural: 6
 ⑨ Small business, commercial and retail use: 77 No Response: 30



22. Which of the following policies should the Town of Seward follow regarding agricultural uses:

Should the Town... **(Circle one response for each option)**

a. encourage the continuation of agriculture in the Town?

Yes	No	No Opinion
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①	②	③
368	8	16

b. strive to preserve the rural nature of the Town?

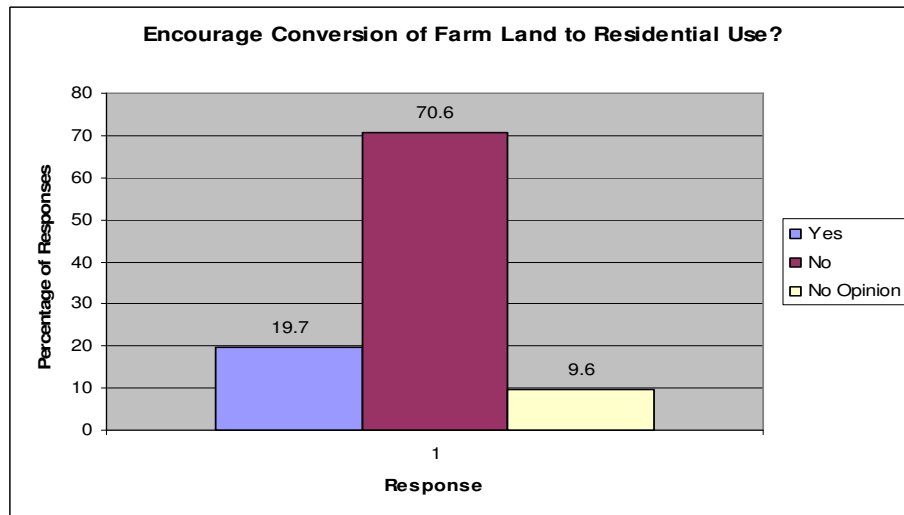
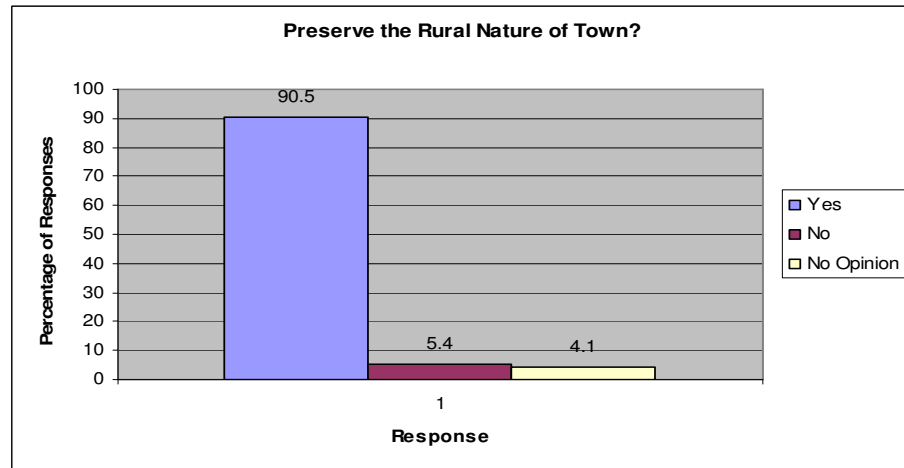
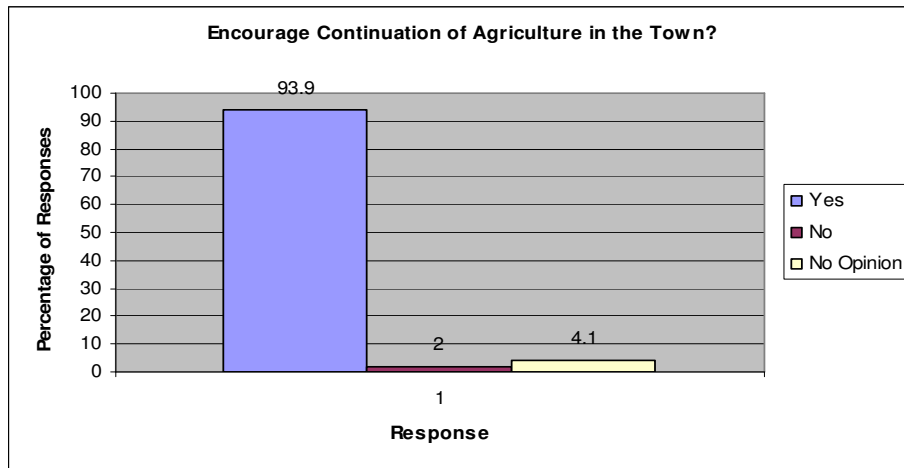
①	②	③
354	21	16

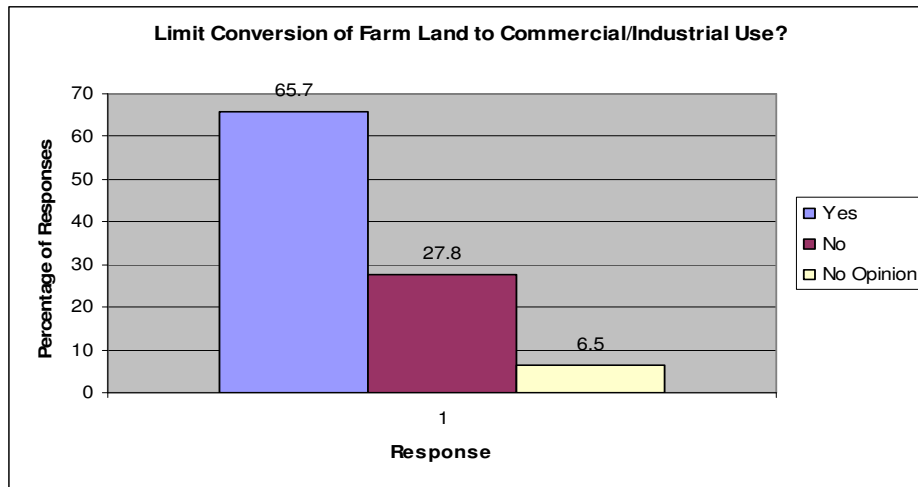
c. encourage the conversion of farm land to residential use?

①	②	③
76	272	37

d. limit the conversion of farm land to commercial or industrial use?

①	②	③
253	107	25

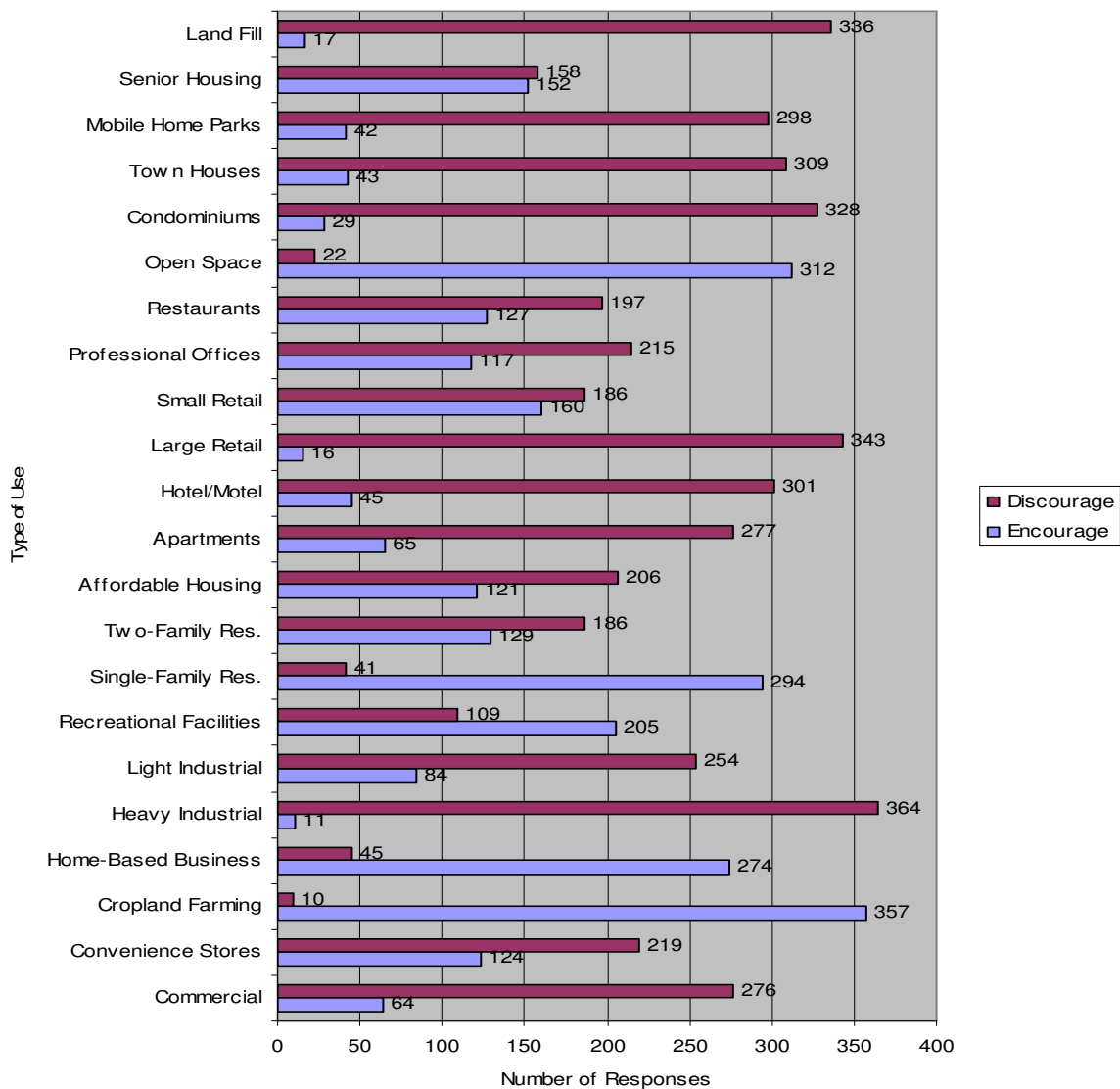




23. Please indicate whether the Town of Seward should encourage or discourage the following types of land uses in your neighborhood (See map accompanying Question 1):

	Encourage	Discourage	No Opinion		Encourage	Discourage	No Opinion
a. Commercial uses	① 64	② 276	③ 44	i. Hotel/Motel	① 45	② 301	③ 37
b. Convenience Stores	① 124	② 219	③ 40	m. Large Retail	① 16	② 343	③ 20
c. Cropland Farming	① 357	② 10	③ 24	n. Small Retail	① 160	② 186	③ 35
d. Home-based Business	① 274	② 45	③ 69	o. Professional Offices	① 117	② 215	③ 44
e. Heavy Industrial	① 11	② 364	③ 10	p. Restaurants	① 127	② 197	③ 54
f. Light Industrial	① 84	② 254	③ 44	q. Open space	① 312	② 22	③ 33
g. Recreational Facilities	① 205	② 109	③ 64	r. Condominiums	① 29	② 328	③ 23
h. Single-Family Residential	① 294	② 41	③ 50	s. Town Houses	① 43	② 309	③ 30
i. Two-Family Residential	① 129	② 186	③ 64	t. Mobile Home Parks	① 42	② 298	③ 38
j. Affordable Housing	① 121	② 206	③ 58	u. Senior Housing	① 152	② 158	③ 71
k. Apartments	① 65	② 277	③ 44	v. Land Fill	① 17	② 336	③ 29

Land Use/Development in Seward



24. Please indicate how important the following reasons were for you or your family in moving to Seward? [Check one]

	Very Important	Important	Not Important		Very Important	Important	Not Important
a. Affordable house or property	① 208	② 118	③ 39	g. Sense of Community	① 105	② 163	③ 87
b. Near Job	① 97	② 180	③ 182	h. Low Crime Rate	① 229	② 114	③ 16
c. Recreational opportunities	① 72	② 97	③ 182	i. Close to Capital District	① 70	② 122	③ 264
d. Rural Location	① 269	② 90	③ 14	j. Near Relatives and Friends	① 118	② 105	③ 138
e. Low Taxes	① 204	② 97	③ 35	k. Good transportation access	① 75	② 105	③ 170
f. Good School	① 153	② 103	③ 104	l. Grew up Here	① 90	② 56	③ 208

Comments: Attached

25. Please indicate how important these are to you and how you feel about their present quality in the Town of Seward by circling the appropriate letters. *You should respond to BOTH importance and quality.*

	How Important to You?			What is Present Quality?		
	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Excellent	Adequate or Average	Poor
a/b. Water Quantity	① 286	② 93	③ 8	① 157	② 167	③ 26
c/d. Water Quality	① 296	② 76	③ 11	① 109	② 188	③ 46
e/f. Wastewater Disposal	① 181	② 143	③ 44	① 58	② 242	③ 31
g/h. Historic Preservation	① 116	② 172	③ 87	① 20	② 246	③ 60
i/j. Land Use Regulation	① 161	② 174	③ 40	① 38	② 229	③ 54
k/l. Code Enforcement	① 121	② 183	③ 66	① 35	② 240	③ 51
m/n. Access to Cable Television	① 104	② 113	③ 164	① 44	② 114	③ 165
o/p. Youth Programs	① 53	② 157	③ 166	① 9	② 161	③ 149
q/r. Recreational Facilities and Opportunities	① 51	② 146	③ 176	① 14	② 170	③ 131
s/t. Protection of Open Spaces	① 191	② 148	③ 39	① 27	② 249	③ 49
u/v. Protection of Steep Slopes	① 128	② 163	③ 82	① 24	② 236	③ 55
w/x. Protection of Floodplains and Wetlands	① 150	② 174	③ 53	① 28	② 247	③ 46

26. Please indicate how important these are to you and how you feel about their present quality in the Town of Seward by circling the appropriate letters. You should respond to both importance and quality.

Feature	How Important to You?			What is Present Quality?		
	Very Important	Important	Not Important	Excellent	Adequate or Average	Poor
a/b. Agriculture appearance of the area	① 219	② 137	③ 30	① 107	② 226	③ 20
c/d. Farming and agriculture as a business	① 224	② 135	③ 25	① 73	② 233	③ 41
e/f. Connection to the heritage of the town	① 79	② 185	③ 108	① 22	② 231	③ 82
g/h. Employment opportunities	① 97	② 149	③ 128	① 11	② 113	③ 215
i/j. Living close to my job	① 99	② 128	③ 143	① 62	② 185	③ 76
k/l. Police coverage	① 104	② 219	③ 51	① 37	② 239	③ 69
m/n. Fire protection and coverage	① 185	② 178	③ 17	① 54	② 255	③ 39
o/p. Ambulatory coverage	① 173	② 184	③ 18	① 49	② 237	③ 46
q/r. Rural character of the Town	① 197	② 161	③ 22	① 86	② 243	③ 18
s/t. Close to family and friends	① 100	② 151	③ 127	① 76	② 216	③ 39
u/v. Quality of school district	① 146	② 156	③ 79	① 99	② 217	③ 26
w/x. Access to Internet	① 141	② 137	③ 93	① 44	② 138	③ 153

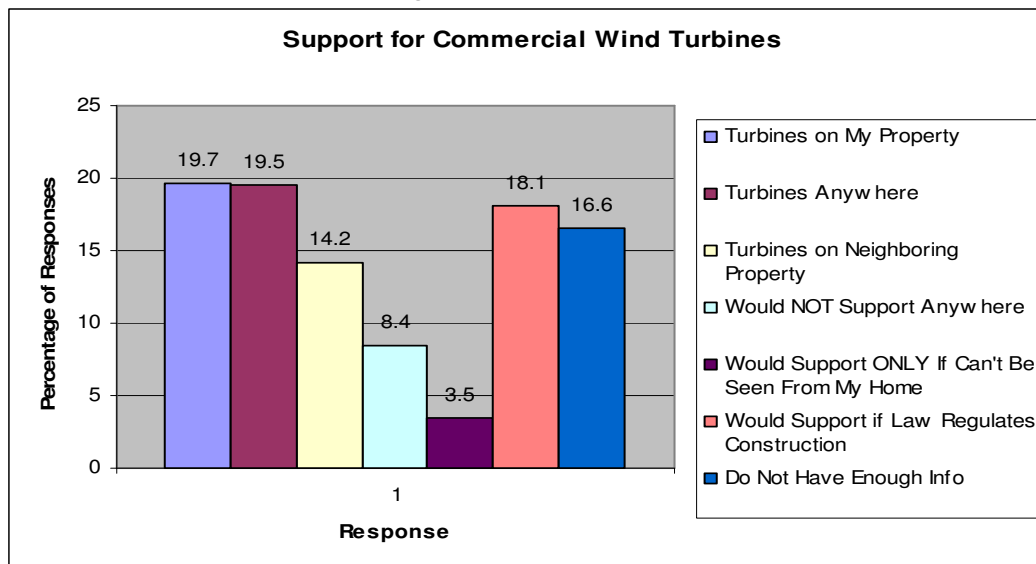
27. On a scale from 1 to 5 how important are the following reasons that you or your family chose to live in the Town of Seward?

	Unimportant	Not Very Important	Important	Very Important	Most Important
a. Affordable house or property	⑤ 16	④ 29	③ 130	② 105	① 78
b. Home near job	⑤ 86	④ 76	③ 94	② 60	① 40
c. Available recreational opportunities	⑤ 75	④ 119	③ 111	② 24	① 20
d. Rural location	⑤ 10	④ 10	③ 113	② 105	① 120
e. Low taxes	⑤ 8	④ 11	③ 116	② 102	① 101
f. Good school	⑤ 46	④ 38	③ 131	② 88	① 54
g. Sense of community	⑤ 29	④ 63	③ 184	② 52	① 31
h. Low crime rate	⑤ 12	④ 12	③ 143	② 114	① 76
i. Close to Capital District	⑤ 74	④ 110	③ 117	② 37	① 18
j. Near relatives or friends	⑤ 76	④ 86	③ 95	② 56	① 50
k. Good access to transportation	⑤ 83	④ 109	③ 110	② 34	① 16
l. Grew up here	⑤ 166	④ 41	③ 55	② 33	① 43
m. Other (Specify Below)					
Comments: Attached	⑤ 18	④ 0	③ 3	② 9	① 23

28. If the Town of Seward were approached today to allow construction of one or more **COMMERCIAL** wind turbines, would you support: *[check all that apply]*

① wind turbine(s) on my property: 134 ② wind turbine(s) anywhere: 133 ③ wind turbine(s) on neighboring property: 97

④ would NOT support the construction of wind turbines anywhere in town: 57 ⑤ I would support wind turbine(s) only if I can't see them from my home: 24 ⑥ would support if there was a law regulating construction and operation of wind turbines: 123 ⑦ Do not have enough information: 113

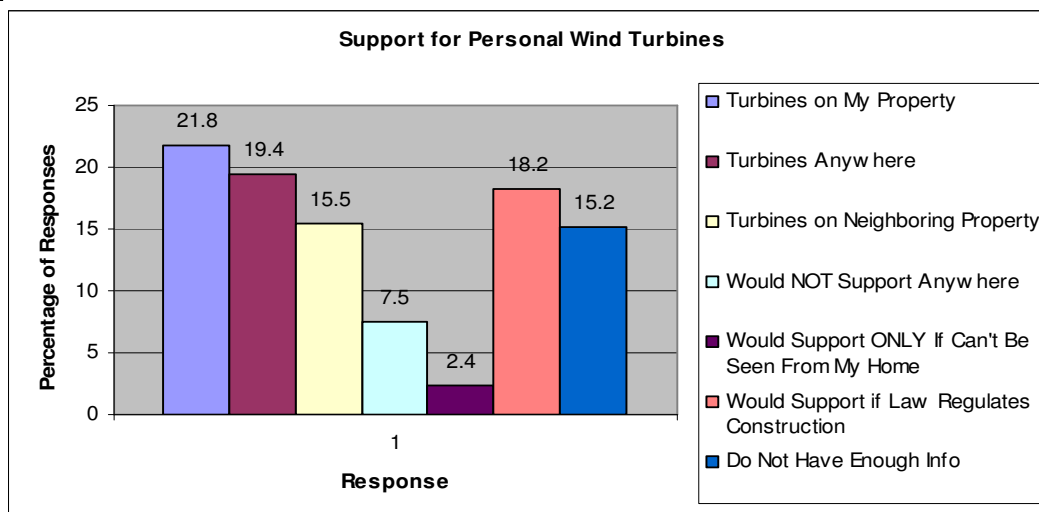


29. The following are a number of issues identified by other municipalities or addressed in local regulations governing the construction and operation of wind turbines, On a scale from 1 to 5 please indicate the level of your concern about each: *(Mark selection after each item)*

	Not concerned	Not very concerned	Moderately concerned	Very concerned	Extremely concerned
a. Visibility	⑤ 87	④ 80	③ 104	② 33	① 82
b. Noise	⑤ 53	④ 67	③ 102	② 50	① 114
c. Impact on bird migration	⑤ 82	④ 69	③ 98	② 55	① 78
d. Bird or bat kills	⑤ 81	④ 66	③ 86	② 69	① 78
e. Local access to power generated	⑤ 31	④ 27	③ 74	② 109	① 138
f. decreased property values	⑤ 45	④ 58	③ 97	② 56	① 122
g. Setbacks	⑤ 29	④ 54	③ 108	② 69	① 99
h. Total number of turbines in any one area	⑤ 41	④ 51	③ 109	② 50	① 131
i. PILOT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) agreements with local governments and school districts.	⑤ 21	④ 24	③ 118	② 81	① 112
j. Payments and lease terms with owners of property on which the generators are located.	⑤ 33	④ 31	③ 114	② 86	① 108
k. light flickering through wind turbine blades	⑤ 91	④ 97	③ 77	② 30	① 81
l. Other	⑤	④	③	②	①
<i>Comments: Attached</i>					

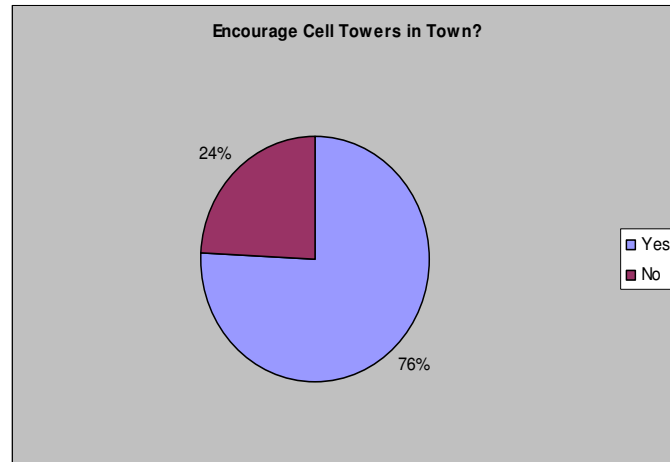
30. If the Town of Seward were approached today to allow construction of one or more **PERSONAL USE** or **MUNICIPAL** wind turbines, would you support: *[check all that apply]*

① wind turbine(s) on my property: 152 ② wind turbine(s) anywhere: 135 ③ wind turbine(s) on neighboring property: 108
 ④ would NOT support the construction of wind turbines anywhere in town: 52 ⑤ I would support wind turbine(s) only if I can't see them from my home: 17 ⑥ would support if there was a law regulating construction and operation of wind turbines: 127 ⑦ Do not have enough information: 106



31. Are there alternative sources of energy that the Town should encourage? ① Yes: 254 ② No: 94
 If yes, would you support natural gas or oil exploration? ① Yes: 171 ② No: 129
Comments: Attached

32. If the Town of Seward was approached to allow the construction of more cell towers would you encourage?
 ① Yes: 274 ② No: 88



33. How would you characterize the property you own or occupy in the Town of Seward? *[Check all that Apply]*
 ① Residential: 202 ② Commercial: 5 ③ Agricultural (*producing a significant farm income*): 73
 ④ Rural residential including incidental livestock (*6 head or fewer*) or minor cultivation (*under 10 acres plowed*): 73
 ⑤ Rural residential with vacant or wooded land: 139 ⑥ Vacant/ wooded land: 60

34. If you reside in the Town of Seward:

a. how would you classify your residence?

① I do not reside in Seward: 57 ② Single family residence on its own lot: 313 ③ Single family residence sharing a lot with another: 4 ④ Two family residence: 5 ⑤ Multi-family residence (*3 or more households in unit*): 2

b. how would you describe the construction of your residence?

① I do not reside in Seward: 49 ② Traditional wood frame or masonry constructed on site: 245
 ③ Factory built components, assembled on site: 20
 ④ Modular construction on permanent foundation (*including single and double wides*): 44
 ⑤ Mobile home on permanent foundation: 11 ⑥ Mobile home which retains capability for relocation: 12

35. What is the source of your water supply? (*If multiple sources, check primary source*)

① Private Well on My Property: 350 ② Cistern: 2
 ③ Spring or other Surface Water Supply (*Pond, Creek, etc*): 21

a. If you presently rely upon a private well for your water supply is it ① a drilled well: 263 or ② a dug well? 27

b. If you know, how deep is the well feet, and what is the well output in gallons per minute (gpm) .

36. Please describe the type of construction for your residence and/or business:

a. your residence *[Check one which most applies]* ① Wood frame: 265 ② Trailer or Mobile home (retaining mobility capability): 16 ③ Mobile home or manufactured structure on permanent foundation: 53 ④ masonry: 6
 ⑤ no residence, or not applicable: 15 ⑥ log house: 12

b. your place of business *[Check one which most applies]* ① Wood frame: 25 ② Trailer or mobile home (retaining mobility capability): 0 ③ Manufactured structure on permanent foundation: 4 ④ masonry: 4 ⑤ Pole building: 9 ⑥ Steel frame: 1 ⑦ no business, or not applicable: 357

37. Concerning the availability of jobs that enable you to provide your expected quality of life...

a. in your opinion, are there currently quality employment opportunities available IN the Town of Seward [Check one]

① Yes: 17 ② No: 353

b. in your opinion are there currently quality employment opportunities available AROUND (within 30 miles) the Town of Seward? [Check one]

① Yes: 252 ② No: 113

c. If you answered "no" to the questions above, in your opinion, what types of jobs are needed in the Town?

Comments: Attached

38. How many people in your household are employed outside of the home? [Fill in the Appropriate Number of Each]

a. Employed Full Time [391]; b. Employed Part Time [97]; c. Not employed outside of home [161].

39. Please indicate the number and status of persons in your household who are not employed outside of the home (Fill in the Appropriate Number of Each):

a. Work at home for money [32];

b. Homemaker [38];

c. Retired [207];

d. Unemployed but looking for work [15];

e. Students [121];

f. Pre-school Children [13]

40. Do you currently have Internet service?

① Yes: 280 ② No: 92

If yes What is the source of your service?

① Cable: 97 ② Satellite: 41

③ Telephone Dial-up: 95

④ Telephone DSL: 40

⑤ Other: 8 (Please Specify type of Service) [air cards (all 8)]

41. How far do the people in your household commute (one-way) to work? [Check one which most applies]

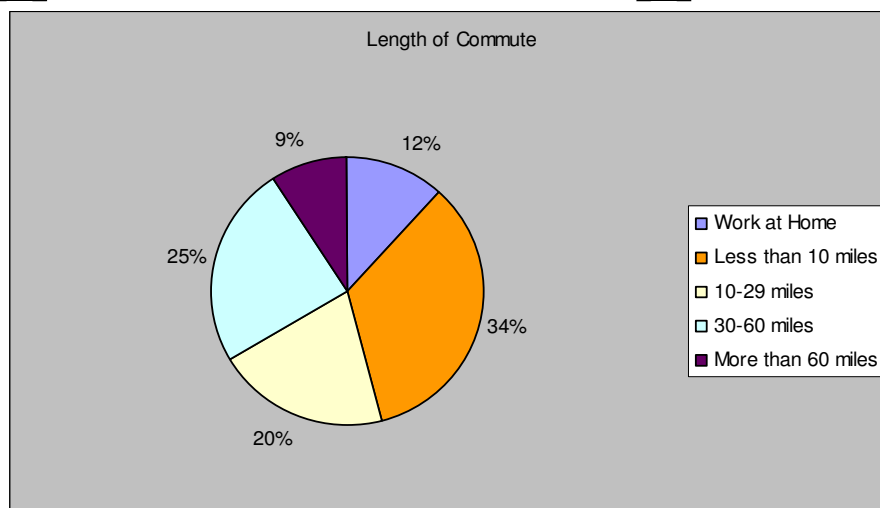
① Work at home or on my own property: 33

② Drive less than 10 miles: 93

③ Drive 10 – 29 miles: 56

④ Drive 30 – 60 miles: 67

⑤ Drive more than 60 miles: 25



42. If you are a business owner or operator, during the last week, how many people (including yourself) were employed at your business in Seward? [Fill in the Appropriate Number of Each]

a. Employed Full Time [31];

b. Employed Part Time [10].

43. Should the Town encourage adult uses such as adult book stores or other adult entertainment?

① Encourage: 15

② Discourage: 309

③ No opinion: 62

44. In regards to Municipal Facility (please answer all questions):

① Would you support building a new Town Facility? ① Yes: 49 ② No: 303

② Support adding on the current facility shared with town and county highway departments? ① Yes: 166 ② No: 152

③ Support building the new Municipal Facility near the current highway facility on the same lot? ① Yes: 64 ② No: 133

④ Should a public hearing be conducted on the municipal facility? ① Yes: 311 ② No: 41

⑤ Support construction within the next:

① 2-3 years: 44

③ 6-10 years: 72

② 4-6 years: 63

④ Never: 120

Q_General_Comments_Query	
SNum	RQGencomment
0	
2	Q28 support only if they can be profitable w/o govt money being spent
7	can't answer question 44 - don't know reasons for consideration of such a change
19	it (Municipal Facility) is not needed, taxes are too high already. Think!
27	I want to know why we need a new town hall, how much it will cost and how much my taxes will go up.
34	29. The only way I would support the construction of wind turbines would be with strict laws regulating setbacks, noise, etc. Any town law regarding wind towers should require the wind company to sign and adhere to the Attorney General's Code of Ethics
36	Let's see if we can expand the tax base and lower our taxes before we think about taking on more expense. I can't afford to add on anymore; why should the town be able to afford it?!
40	I honestly don't see much happening except high tax rates. There is no public water or sewage. Nor is there any police, fire, or medical personnel from Seward, everything is from Cobleskill. There are no jobs or stores here. 10 houses on Rt 10 is it.
45	44. 40-50 years
64	44. use one of the buildings Seward owns and split the duties
76	44. if town grows and it's needed then do it
80	43. loud and clear - NO!!
82	dissolve the town
83	town government in all of NY should be eliminated
85	no wind turbines!!
92	44. look into need (before building)
107	16. depends what it is
108	29. won't agree unless get a % reduction for own electrical usage
108	29. will only agree if % reduction for home electric usage.
108	29.) will only agree if get % reduction for electric usage. 37.) little business here and should remain so; farms are good and people who live here know they'll likely have to travel for jobs
130	19. livestock is the only way to keep open land open
131	I don't care what people do with their property! I just want my taxes LOWERED!
138	44.) when needed?
143	44. repair my road first; lower my taxes
151	10. Neighbors running illegal slaughter house, code enforcement officer said he'd give them a chance! Asked me where I was from! Does that really matter? By the way, I'm born and raised in upstate NY!
155	12. Hunters are all over my private property and I have

Q_General_Comments_Query	
SNum	RQGencomment
	been robbed 7 times!!!
155	12. Hunters are all over my private property and I have been robbed 7 times!!! 14. Too many hunters going wherever they want - no police department!!
156	Respondent is a handicapped man - needs guidance; lives at home; enjoys working part time at college
157	19. too much land for one house - we need the taxes! 44. no money, and we don't need more taxes!!!
161	10. "residential" zoning now restricts future use of property, which was originally bought and designed to use as a small farm with riding horses. Property can't be sold for this use which decreases property value and resaleability to those who want this
163	44. if needed and when needed
164	44. depends on the hearing - don't know why this is needed
166	I own acreage in Seward that's used for ag. crop production. I responded to those questions on the survey that pertained to a non-resident landowner with an interest in agriculture.
178	44. you have the equipment and manpower to DO SO
190	44. 5) when the economy is better
191	43. Separate religion from government
213	It doesn't matter unless you are a good ole boy. Some can, some can't. You're all liars
225	26. rural does not mean run down!!; big fancy school, lousy educators; school taxes too much!! BELT TIGHTENING TIME 43. NO SMUT PLEASE 44. no more spending!!; cut tax burden!!; WE DO NOT NEED ANOTHER FACILITY, stop it
228	23.) would NOT discourage commercial development on Rt 10 and parts of 165. 44.) at this point I think this would be a waste of money
232	19. large business/commercial should be considered if it can lower taxes. 28. want more info.
246	I didn't fill this out because I live in the town of Carlisle and only have a 25 acre strip on the west side of our farm in the town of Seward.
266	see survey: submission solely in letter form (regarding wind energy)
269	44.) (5) maybe (in 6-10 years)
282	15.) In general, the mix of farms and mountain woods should be considered a great resource for its yield of fresh produce and grass-fed dairy and meat, as well as its valuable habitats for diversity of flora and fauna.
290	44. 5) if it is ever really needed, which I doubt - maybe 20 years
291	44. when times are better
303	44.2) and 5) after public hearing mind will be made up
314	44. Cannot answer without information. What would it be for? Silly questions
315	I have kept my 2.8 acres atop of Settles Mtn as a

Q_General_Comments_Query	
SNum	RQGencoment
	"piece of home." We moved to TX 30 years ago but still call Schoharie County home. Thank you all.
318	43. NEVER!
326	19. In my particular area there isn't much room for any kind of development. I can't think of one thing that the community as a whole would support, unless it was a big box store.
344	43. Definitely not!
345	44. is there a need?
351	44. if and when there is demonstrated and affordable need
359	44. 5) 15+ years
363	44. 5) = \$ needed
364	5. 132 acres divided btw Seward and Sharon 43. Absolutely not 44. do not know if needed
365	43. State question clearly - should the Town approve the business application if..., or are you asking if the

Q_General_Comments_Query	
SNum	RQGencoment
	town should approve residents' patronization of such regardless of where sited? 44. What is Municipal Facility for?
368	28. need to see plans for turbine construction somewhere it would not disrupt views or property
369	44. consider other options
370	44. not at this time
374	I don't really care what people do with [their] house or land
376	I would most prefer to see area stay rural/suburban. Taxes are high & some utilities (internet, cable) are lacking, but that is preferable to heavy traffic that accompanies dense residential and industrial/commercial uses. Good ag. base & college - use
394	44. not necessary at this point

Q10_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ10comment
5	reduces availability to do things with property
6	need more business to carry tax load and get funds
10	I believe zoning not fully enforced
14	I own the land, should be able to do as I please
15	haphazard subdivision
19	there is no commercial zoning
27	we support zoning
34	we support zoning
36	need it to maintain country life & allow business
45	unknown
51	land use regs debate - livestock farm building
56	Most zoning is to say no, not "how can we help"?!
62	can't build barn for tools for land without house
71	at least not yet
76	don't know
82	zoning not enforced
83	apparently not enforced
84	I don't like taking peoples' rights away
95	school sent my brother & I to Radez not Golding
137	too controlling
151	neighbors running illegal slaughter house
155	road not maintained; road and taxes not seasonal
157	lot requirement to build a home not reasonable
161	residential zoning restrictive & lowers value
165	I pay as much taxes as someone with more land
173	like it just the way it is
177	too many regulations
181	I'm assessed as much as someone with more acreage
186	it has stopped cluster housing
197	like large lot sizes
204	vacant land they said was too small

Q10_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ10comment
205	had to stop work on small barn too close to road
219	luckily could grandfather
238	neighbor and animal issues
239	lots are way too small
242	lots are too small
250	really don't know the zoning laws
269	want Seward to stay rural/ag!!!
274	75% needs to be eliminated
275	bought farm land not used for building a home
278	80% of zoning should be eliminated
282	lack the knowledge to respond
287	nothing of consequence
288	don't know zoning laws; need more info
290	should be agriculture
292	too much residential that was ag
300	keep in agriculture
302	needed site variances in the past
304	look around, some abide by rules and some don't
310	they have impacted some residents
318	increased taxes
322	need to have strict laws on burning junk
338	not a resident - not informed about zoning
341	too much gov't
344	haphazard use of land and farming
345	if the land around me is developed - negatively!
351	promotes agricultural aspects of area
353	don't need others saying what you can do
359	too much zoning
365	don't weaken current zoning or change w/o public
367	Moved here to be in ag. setting - now residential
372	intrudes too much on personal lives

Q10_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ10comment
377	smacks of communism, curtails BASIC RIGHTS
378	annoying system - too many rules/regs
380	would like to build and move here, not sure yet
382	couldn't put shed where we wanted
390	too much farm land being sold as parcels
393	fewer trailers that are depreciable - tax base
397	zoning is prohibiting growth
403	love the open spaces and farms
405	need easement to access property
407	Lutheran church & town residence issues

Q14_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ14comment
3	farmland converted to houses
4	too many feral cats
5	excessive speeds on roads; too much vehicle volume
10	houses are maintained better
11	dangerous roads - 435 and patrick road too fast
15	farm divided into too small subdivisions
17	too many ATVs; vandalism on Jersey Ln
18	subdivisions
19	new homes and neighbors
20	better neighbors
24	people want to live in a rural area
28	Hamlet of Seward unchanged except unkempt homes
32	don't know if or what changes have taken place
36	many more homes around me - 5 I can see from house
38	no economic development proposed
42	zoning - subdivision regs
47	not allowing some small business in
51	modular homes, busy-body regs; livestock regs
54	too many junk yards in Dorloo
59	too many abandoned vehicles in yards
61	vandalism on Jersey Ln
66	too much junk in yards
67	location
69	unkempt homes
71	deterioration of farm situations
73	junk piling; more homes
74	neighbors' houses not kept in repair
75	Dorloo store closed
80	junk around houses/uncared for houses
82	too many new houses on road
83	new construction on 3-5 acre plots
84	lost farms
85	traffic on 10 should be 45 mph max
90	too many farms are not worked
91	There's not much that could change!
93	no work

Q14_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ14comment
94	some owners don't keep up with repairs
97	no work
101	TRAFFIC
101	traffic
102	more traffic, rude drivers, influx of new owners
105	too many new houses
107	sub dividing properties going down hill
108	land with campers and junk car on Lawyersville Rd
111	only 7 people live on this road
112	less road maintenance, more burglaries
113	taxes are too high
117	lost all our farms
123	except the farm next door is no longer active
124	our kids now live here
129	more trash on roads, more noise/traffic
130	increased housing = decreased outdoor recreation
137	the times!
139	too much traffic on Rt 10
141	buildings not being maintained
143	improvement of properties around us
144	more new houses
145	losing open space to more houses
146	yes for better
151	see #10 and general comments
152	too many restrictions
153	no opinion
155	no maintenance to town & too many hunters all over
157	need too much frontage and acreage to build a home
158	no significant changes over the last 8 years
161	more homes abandoned or in disrepair; zoning probs
162	farmers haven't sold and subdivided (great thing)
165	more houses on the road
167	too many houses
181	taxes out of control for benefits we receive
183	roads better
194	too many new houses
196	too much development
200	new people moving in
204	too many neighbors/restrictions on hunting
205	aside from some new houses
208	small area
210	no one moving in; nothing changed good or bad
212	increased traffic
219	more traffic
221	the times!
222	more houses, paved roads allow people to go 60 mph
225	tax burden too large that's why
227	tax burden too high
232	became more populated yet taxes have decreased

Q14_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ14comment
233	increased population = paved roads/power/mail
235	general store and P.O. both closed
238	neighbor and animal issues
239	too many subdivisions and cabins
240	a little more crowded
242	too many subdivisions
250	unkempt/vacant properties; fenced animals
253	more traffic/noise/dirt due to cnty truck facility
255	not too much happens
260	neighbor improvements
263	residence built on adjacent land in prominent spot
264	everyone respect each other's balance in life
267	significant new housing around my land
270	nearby homes inhabited by undesirable neighbors
273	lack of business; taxes too high; economy
274	farms are leaving
277	more people moving in
278	farms disappearing
284	residential/ag. area and has no more businesses
287	using our road as a dumping ground
288	litter all along road
289	farm land in use all around my 6 acres
290	junkyard was added & general deterioration
294	lack of enforcement of trespassing laws
295	too much new construction
301	taxes too high - hard to live
305	zoning rules, economy, water quality
307	small building lots cropping up
308	seems to be fewer dumps
310	people care about their property looking nice
316	loss of store; P.O. and increase in traffic
318	new homes
323	neighbors moved from dairy to beef cows
325	farming much less
326	still areas that need cleaning up
327	a few new houses that's all
338	local lack of dev opps offered and poor economy
340	permitting outside storage of "merchandise"
344	unmonitored slaughtering
345	agricultural land is being developed
348	only 4 homes on the road - not much to change
351	little turnover of property
353	not allowing single-wides discriminates by wealth
359	taxes too high for area, people can't pay
360	farmland becoming building lots
363	zoning, the economy
365	no one has \$ to make changes
367	my view is impacted by new house & I smell septic
369	more houses/traffic; illegal atv etc use on road

Q14_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ14comment
372	development, increased traffic, accidents- 2 fatal
373	lived full time '77-'84; part time '85-present
375	taxes
377	too much development; people moving here
382	lower incomes
383	more junk vehicles/junk properties
386	a new home built nearby our property
388	new home built close to mine
390	too many residences - like a thruway
392	rural
397	growth is prohibited or seriously restricted
398	changed - more activity on minimum maintenance rd
401	two residents have allowed homes to deteriorate
403	I assume there are restrictions on use
408	people drive too fast on Gardnersville Rd
410	very little growth - I like that!
411	my property is remote

Q15_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ15comment
3	keep all environmentally sensitive lands protected
5	wetlands in town; Loonenburgh Tpke - historical rd
7	any known historical sites should be protected
10	old school house, Gauge and Odd Fellows Halls
15	Non-maintained town roads throughout town
19	wetland and mountains
21	Settles Mtn Rd
23	areas that are already residential
27	most of the town is scenic and should be protected
28	hamlet of Seward should remain as is
32	West Creek feeding the Schoharie and watershed
33	farmland; swamps
34	Bates farm, churches/cemeteries, mtns and pastures
38	open space
39	out back door; buildings
41	Catherine Markley gravestone Rt 10 - Janesville
42	Loonenbergh Tpke - historic
47	Seward Pond
48	432 Gardnersville Rd - scenic views very important
49	large undeveloped forest lands should remain green
51	many
53	old creamery, farms
55	farm and wood lands
56	old cemeteries
58	432 Gardnersville Rd - important scenic views
64	the old train station
66	Mill Pond Fall on 165; cemetery on 10/165
67	hills - woodland areas
68	town-wide

Q15_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ15comment
69	all cemeteries should be mowed
70	wetlands and waterways should have buffer
71	keep the land undeveloped
76	train station, tavern, church, ponds and creeks
78	someone should write a history of the hamlet
83	cemeteries for historical & genealogical purposes
88	cemetery on Rt 10
93	farm land to keep rural
95	all farmland should be protected/remain as is
97	farm land to keep rural
100	along Rt 165
108	enough building on south side of Lawyersville Rd
109	wetlands, open fields, and mountain areas
110	all of Seward
124	the view down the valley towards Cobleskill
125	view down the Rt 10 valley
130	elm tree on Lowe Rd
137	scenic
138	wetlands - without exception
143	endangered box turtles south of 145; good well H2O
145	all cemeteries and historic site along Rt 10/Rhnbk
146	wildlife as a whole
153	no opinion
155	Harroway Rd paved and plowed!!!
158	Loonenbergh Tpke; all historic roads
161	beautiful mountain views and pastoral farmland
162	farm land and views of hills shouldn't be changed
163	don't know of any
164	not sure what protected means in this context
168	just leave everything the way it is
170	all historic sites should be protected
175	all historic sites should be protected
186	all historic sites should be protected/documented
187	NO MORE asphalt on "dirt roads"
192	hilltops should remain scenic
195	once they're gone, they're gone forever!
196	Settles Mtn and Smokey Hollow
200	old historic homes have history
203	Cemeteries; wilderness - Rigley, Bush, Decatur Rds
210	Rhinebeck/Hallenbeck/Gardnersville Rds scenic
219	too much woodcutting
220	a very nice area
221	town is lovely
222	I would be in favor; can't think of areas
225	protect them all!!
227	all of it
228	all of Lowe/Bush Rds
232	all farming properties
233	creeks that flow through town & undeveloped hills

Q15_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ15comment
239	open space B - very scenic; should be open space
240	cemeteries, Indian sites, old buildings, RR, swamp
245	Bush St, Clove Rd
253	school house and Putriment farm
260	trees
263	rural roads have beautiful views; don't violate
264	the view from Castro Mtn overlooking Seward town
265	Gardnersville Rd from 145 to 10
270	Lowe Rd - farming/hunting etc; swamp area - herons
273	Markley Rd looking NNW; Hill Rd looking NNW
282	mix of farms and mountain woods should be [kept]
289	environmental
290	mine on NE side of Loonenbergh
300	Clove Rd, Loonenbergh Tpke etc
309	back roads - wooded area
312	Gordon Rd - Panoramic view
313	all of the high land areas
315	Seward cemetery
316	back roads/wooded areas should be kept
317	don't know exactly
318	water areas
323	wetlands by the mill pond
326	most back roads; where property is kept up
331	please preserve beautiful open land
333	all require consideration/protection
335	scenic views on Lawyersville Rd
343	ag. areas should have restrictions on aesthetics
344	farm areas on Clove Rd - "country" aspect
345	Rt 10 corridor
348	not that I know of
351	protect soil for crops; watershed for people etc
363	Clove Rd; the hills and forests
364	beautiful view from our home site
365	town-wide scenic areas - leave them all alone
372	any open land should be considered before develop
377	open/agricultural land
380	old fort, etc
381	don't want gov't controlling more freedoms we have
384	Clove Rd
386	old cemetery
388	historic cemeteries
389	Clove Rd and Bush St
390	wetlands
392	Clove Rd
393	the whole town is historic
394	the town
397	wetlands on Rhinebeck near 145
399	Clove Rd, vista from Winegard to I-88, W R'ville
403	scenic views along secondary roads

Q15_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ15comment
412	views from most roads very pleasant

Q17_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ17comment
5	most roads have unique features
10	old RR ROW should be maintained for public trails
11	patrick rd, hill rd, winegard rd, podpadic rd
15	Empie Ln
23	mainly agricultural & open space; residential
24	rural back roads - main reason to live here
27	Rt 10, 145 ,Clove, Lowe, Lawyersville Rds
28	all of the town is especially attractive
33	clove rd after bridge; bush st; lowe rd
34	parts of Lowe Rd, hallenbeck Rd, Lawyerville Rd
36	Hill Rd
39	most back roads
41	Rt 10 near Cobleskill
42	dairy farms
44	165, Low Rd, West R'ville Rd, Neval Rd, Clove Rd
48	Gardnersville area
51	many
53	Lowe
55	Clove Rd
58	Gardnersville area
60	hamlet of Seward - would be nice to see stores
64	Patrick Rd, Clove Rd
66	Berry Ln
67	165; 10; scenic views (entire town)
68	town-wide
71	no through traffic on Trillium Ln
76	spillway on 165
77	Clove Rd
80	maintain farm land
84	most of Seward
93	route 165
97	Rt 165
100	along Rt 165, Rt 10 and most back roads
101	Clove Rd - less congestion
108	Lowe, Clove, Lawyersville, Hallenbach, Rhinebeck
109	most of the rural roads
110	Gardnersville Rd, Jersey Ln, Rhinebeck Rd
123	rural, scenic roads: Loonenbergh, Rhinebeck, Lowe
125	views from the hills (W R'ville, etc)
129	Clove Rd, Rigley Rd
130	Clove Rd (valley)
137	people have mentioned beauty of Gardnersville Rd
139	Clove Rd & Lowe Rd
143	a lot of roads and properties
146	many roads and properties

Q17_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ17comment
149	scenery
152	Warnerville cut-off
155	Harroway Rd & Rt 10
158	Loonenbergh Tpke
160	Lawyersville and Markley Rds
162	Lawyersville Rd has gorgeous views and farmland
166	Patrick Rd along West Creek - scenic and tranquil
167	all of them; keep "the country" country
169	all
186	Lowe Rd - there has been little to no development
192	open land
196	Lawersville, Clove and Lowe Rds
198	Rt 10 and Clove Rd
203	Engleville Rd; Catskill foothills (see #15)
210	roads mentioned above scenic & pristine
220	Gardnersville Rd
221	most all
222	entire town is beautiful, keep it as is
225	all of them...
227	all of them
228	Lowe/Bush Rds
231	Rt 10 Hyndsville & Clove Rd first 3 houses
232	almost all of them
239	Clove & W Clove, Decatur, Soto, Bush Rds
240	many of the back roads; Lowe Rd
245	Bush St, Clove Rd
253	NW view Rt 10; sharp curve in Janesville
256	pretty red barn in there view
263	Bush St; Lowe, Rhinebeck, Markley Rds - ag views
264	Pinchino? Farm, red barn in the distant view
270	Lowe Rd - beautiful scenery and wildlife
287	Clove Rd cuts through farms/residential - scenic
288	Clove Rd - farms/foliage are beautiful
289	all the back roads and farming areas
290	many
291	Slate Hill Rd especially
297	entire community/area is very nice
301	Slate Hill Rd
306	Trillium Ln - entirely resid. and well maintained
309	Lowe Rd, Rhinebeck - scenic
310	Trillium lane is a lovely, attractive development
312	Gordon Rd
313	Rt 145 & Gordon Rd
316	Lowe, Rhinebeck Rds - scenic view
317	a lot - too much to write
322	beautiful rural area
323	the hills
329	county & state roads - maintained better
332	farmland, meadows, wooded areas

Q17_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ17comment
333	Rt 165
335	Hallenbeck, Lawyersville Rds; Hyndsville area
343	Rt 10
344	165 past Dorloo; Rt 10 Hyndsville past Janesville
345	northern stretch of Rt 10 looking south
351	most of the farms are well kept
363	Clove, Bush, W R'ville Rds
364	many but don't know the names
365	town-wide (too many to list)
368	Slate Hill Rd
369	view near intersection of 145 & Rhinebeck Rd
372	old back roads, "lightly populated" areas
373	Rts 165 & 10 - main roads of travel
380	Main St
384	Rt 10
389	Clove Rd and Bush St
392	Rt 10
398	W R'ville, Ledge, Rigley, Clove Rds
403	view west from 145 at Gordon/Rhinebeck Rds
408	all the roads

Q18_Fill_In_Query	
SNum	RQ18comment
1	used tools business on Rt 10 and junk on Rhinebeck
4	Loonenburgh/Lawyersville bridge needs to be weeded
7	Rt 10 south of Hyndsville (plash tools)
19	areas with junk all around
22	Karas and Winegard Rds not maintained - stormwater
27	parts of Rhinebeck, Loonenburg, and Rt 10
33	clove rd before the bridge (close to rt 10)
34	Loonenbergh, Gardnersville, Rt 10, Rhinebeck Rd
38	debris and junk visible from public right of way
41	Warnerville cutoff (not in Seward)
53	certain areas of W. Richmondville Rd
60	the old Seward store
64	Patrick - where the road is decaying
66	165 after W R'ville Rd heading towards county line
69	beginning of Clove Rd
74	Park Ave, houses in disrepair and yards unkempt
76	road by tavern where garbage was taken
78	Loonenbergh Tpke
79	Podpadic Rd
83	auto junk yard on Rhinebeck Rd
93	W Richmondville Rd and Rt 10
94	2 or 3 properties on Park Ave
97	W Richmondville Rd and Rt 10
101	Rt 10
107	run down houses, vacant houses, debris
108	Janesville and old fix-it area not pretty

Q18_Fill_In_Query	
SNum	RQ18comment
109	some of Rt 10; unkempt homes and/or farms
112	Rigley and Ledge Rds - no maintenance and dumping
117	corner of Loon. and Gard. Rds; tool guy Rt 10
124	junkyard on Rhinebeck Rd
125	junkyards
129	W R'ville Rd near Rt 7
130	Loonenbergh near Gardnersville
133	Rhinebeck Rd needs to be paved - too dusty
135	Loonenbergh due to condition of road
139	the junk yard at the end of Hyndsville
143	run down and neglected properties here and there
146	a lot of properties are neglected and eye sores
149	unkempt properties
150	unkempt property
155	HARROWAY ROAD!!!!
166	Rock Dstrct Rd - 145 to Carlisle - drains on crops
170	mini farms with too many animals and no space
175	areas that look like dumps or are have no upkeep
181	Rhinebeck Rd; Loonenbergh Tpke
186	Hollenbeck Rd - all subdivided into building lots
187	W R'ville Rd - new homes don't fit surroundings
189	Gardnersville Rd needs repaving
192	trailer park, falling down structures
202	Loonenbergh Tpke
203	properties with junk vehicles & offroad landfills
216	Rt 10 in Hyndsville
223	junk cars and debris all over unmowed property
230	Patrick Rd is becoming dangerous (part of Rd gone)
231	Clove Rd from Rt 10 to the first bridge
239	Rt 165
250	corner of Loonenbergh & Rhinebeck - fallen barns
258	W Richmondville Rd
263	the town is a gem for rural beauty, don't develop!
270	Rt 10 farm with shabby shelters for sickly horses
272	Lawyersville Rd - too much junk unintended
273	County Rt 29 in severe disrepair; dangerous
289	Rt 10
290	most of Loonenbergh
291	area of 164 in Dorloo near church
297	junked up yards on 165 btw Lowe & W R'ville Rds
298	Park Ave
301	Rt 165 in town - boarded up houses
309	Rt 10 - junkyard
310	there are some unattractive houses in hamlets
316	Rt 10 by flash - junk yard!!
317	neglected ones
318	Rt 165 - villages of Seward and Dorloo poor repair
320	Dorloo looks like a dump! Very unattractive
322	homes not taken care of - junk in yards

Q18_Fill_In_Query	
SNum	RQ18comment
326	I'm not going to answer this
329	seasonal - subdivision will cost too much in tax
332	unkempt personal property
340	Rt 10 in Hyndsville - see question 14
344	Rt 10 across from Fromire; corner of Wnegrd/Clove
345	Rolle(?) trucking area/Marchs(?) farm
346	former Dorloo and Seward stores
351	run down homes along Clove Rd (rentals?)
359	why, so you can abandon them?
362	junkyard on Rhinebeck; abandoned trailer on Hallen
365	Rt 165/Dorloo - fine derelict property owners
367	any road with a new house "plopped" on top of hill
368	Park Ave (esp 127) needs town to require fixing
369	any abandoned or neglected properties - eyesores
380	the ones with junked cars visible
383	Rt 165 from Lowe Rd to county line - junk property
386	none in particular, but poorly maintained property
388	maybe a few poorly maintained properties
390	too many driveways to use rd like a thruway
393	Rt 10 south of Hynds. - used merchandise eyesore
397	Plash tools; Rhinebeck Rd near old Ace; junk etc
398	any of the above with trash dumping
401	several homes on Park Ave, corner of 165
408	yards with junk cars, etc
410	boarded house across from Lowe Rd: fix or demolish
413	mine needs to be tarred

Q24_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ24comment
9	non-resident landowners
84	farm location
110	its natural beauty
112	low crime rate in the past
143	I wish taxes were low
162	low taxes - don't we wish
181	taxes not low anymore
192	freedom from noise, traffic and SPEEDING!
198	love the mountains/farmland/beauty
225	taxes too high! Where is bus stop?
227	HIGH taxes (not low taxes)
228	low taxes? where?
235	by accident
240	moved here 55 years ago
268	do not live in Seward
273	taxes in Seward for certain are not low
292	taxes too high!
325	born here; always lived here
330	will be building home in 2 years
331	do not reside in Seward yet. Love open space

Q24_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ24comment
364	we love the property and area
367	beauty of Seward's open spaces
379	taxes not low enough
394	taxes too high
406	moving OUT due to taxes too high/unreasonable

Q27_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ27comment
9	non-resident
11	rural home with acreage close to I-88 and albany
19	lower taxes - you're killing us and using our land
24	taxes need to be lowered - only reason to move
41	love Hyndsville
54	born & brought up in Seward, lived here all 91 yrs
60	view of hills and mountains
62	views, wildlife, agricultural community, quiet
64	need public transportation so people can commute
67	loved the area! Beauty of hills; woods (wild life)
68	open space
76	best scenic views in rural New York
84	farm location
85	owned a house near Seward
102	beautiful area
117	family only - no neighbors
123	low taxes no longer a reality!
143	great views
152	less zoning restrictions than city
161	having riding horses and small personal homestead
162	low taxes - when do we see that?
175	wanted to live where it isn't crowded or hurried
177	there used to be freedom of land use
192	taxes were a lot lower 6 years ago
206	climate
219	wife's family grew up here, mine did not!
222	able to build small home; no hoops; low taxes
225	taxes too high, stop spending
228	it's beautiful here
240	moved here 55 years ago
243	great place to raise a family
264	respect of other's rights
267	limited gov't in my life
268	do not live in Seward
290	scenic view
302	vacant land owner
330	land owner - will build in 2 years
331	affordable land; hope taxes are affordable in 3yrs
338	survey not designed for non-resident landowners
343	non-resident landowner!
345	this is my home!

Q27_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ27comment
373	scenic view of land
375	taxes are too high
397	too bad we didn't know taxes were so high
399	keep wife happy
413	views

Q29_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ29comment
19	must have enough room
34	see general comments
47	like wind if they produce power for me and my town
48	spread out
51	construction of new power lines
52	need alternate power
58	spread them out instead of all together
62	usage should be given back to townspeople for free
67	no information
76	in other states they are high up; no bad effects
85	negotiators for the town not competent
102	ruining the landscape
108	need standards for turbines/acre
110	no way!
120	needs some more information
123	feel that turbines should be owned by the TOWN
134	lower cost of electricity
143	who is making the money generated by power
167	undecided
169	undecided
178	who puts them up? U.S.A.
187	wind farms (many turbines) placed away from homes
192	keep them off mountain tops
193	health hzrd; not viable without gov't (taxpayer) \$
203	maintain 1000' setbacks
222	would support if I get free electricity
225	law should regulate location
228	depends on size, no., who benefits from power, etc
240	don't believe there is a problem (regarding d)
252	cost
253	provision for removal when obsolete/abandoned
254	health & environmental impacts
282	integration of turbines with needs/uses of land
287	information such as PILOT not available
290	more tax value placed on leasers (should be)
301	commercial is noisier than home
304	safety and noise
311	they are a waste of money
323	I think they are beautiful
331	impact on value of land - would like more info
338	town should encourage leases with landowners

Q29_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ29comment
349	strongly against wind turbines
351	access rds to turbine/reliability of maintenance
353	homeowner business - lease terms not town concern
354	waste of money, not cost effective - don't support
363	impact of construction
365	kickbacks
371	location in town
381	no turbines
394	need much more information
397	reasonable regulation
413	obstruction by views

Q31_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ31comment
2	solar
3	photovoltaic
5	solar or wind power
9	wind, solar or passive solar
10	wind of properly regulated; solar
13	solar
14	wind turbines
15	gas ekeware in Catskill area
16	solar energy
18	natural gas or oil to benefit all in Catskills
23	wind and solar
24	municipal owned only
26	solar
27	conservation!! Follow existing codes
30	solar
32	solar - ask Julie about solar company interest
33	use what our domestic environment provides us on
34	energy conservation is best - get energy audit
35	drill for gas
41	solar - lights/water
42	solar
45	hydroelectric
48	solar
49	wind, natural gas with env. Regs and oversight
51	wind, solar, geothermal, home-based, hydro
55	all sources - low impact & return to original
60	solar
64	wind, solar - no gas or oil (destroy environment)
70	gas - only if there's a lot and low impact
71	wind energy only! No oil or gas
76	gas or oil anywhere to lower utility costs
80	natural gas - do not alter land appearance
85	probability it would be uneconomic
90	hydro
92	supervised

Q31_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ31comment
100	bio fuel
101	natural gas - much shale on property
103	natural gas
109	Marcellus shale
111	wind - it's clean
112	gas, only with more info
117	solar, gas, oil - anything to help bring down cost
138	natural gas?
139	solar - natural gas info should be sent to all
147	spoiling water
152	oil/gas and solar power
154	wind, solar
157	natural gas and oil
158	solar
160	natural gas or solar
161	not enough knowledge on subject to make choice
170	natural gas in outlying areas
175	natural gas in outlying areas
177	should use hydro power via many streams of Seward
181	natural gas a possibility
186	possibility of hydro-electric
187	natural gas
189	solar panels
191	depends on environmental impact
192	solar panels; hydro electric
193	Marcellus shale gas - income for town & residents
195	solar for municipal use
200	natural gas
204	need information on this
206	solar
217	wind and solar
220	solar
221	solar
223	all alternative energy should be explored
225	personal use wind, solar or thermal
227	personal (with limitations)
228	wind depends on size; gas = H2O quality concerns
230	solar and wind
232	solar, water
233	water power
234	solar
237	natural gas
245	solar
250	natural gas or solar
260	both
267	gas/oil, woo/organic, hydro, wind (even nuclear)
270	solar
271	any type should be discussed; allowed if possible
282	solar on resid./munic. Facilities

Q31_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ31comment
287	gas & oil - non-invasive exploration; methane
288	gas (methane, etc) as long as it is not invasive
292	solar
293	solar
294	natural gas
297	natural gas, oil if present (both)
307	I would support natural gas exploration
308	solar, natural gas
310	companies drill where there is shale
311	natural gas
314	natural gas
318	wind
323	geothermal, solar - anywhere
325	natural gas - water (West Creek) - wind power
328	solar, wind
329	wind, gas, oil - do not limit my right to make \$
331	solar
335	natural gas exploration - we need more than oil
337	gas
338	commercial/private solar in addition to above
339	natural gas
341	wind, solar
343	low impact natural gas exploration
346	solar; hydroelectric power by the mill pond
348	solar, wind, biofuels, hydroelectric at dam
351	encourage solar/geothermal, no gas
353	not town concern; infringing on ownership rights
354	any cost effective source anywhere
358	solar; geothermal
359	nat. gas, oil, solar - but leases with landowner
363	geothermal, solar & personal wind
366	natural gas drilling
369	for town or residential?
373	solar?
378	solar and wind
380	I would also support wind and be a pilot site
384	natural gas
385	solar
386	uncertain
391	WATER POWER
392	natural gas
397	shale - solar
399	W-T-E, wind, solar, biofuel
401	solar to help light homes - clean energy
403	natural gas - to lower fuel costs and provide jobs
411	natural gas and wood chip combustion generator

Q35_Fill_In_x2		
SNum	RQ35commenta	RQ35commentb

Q35_Fill_In_x2		
SNum	RQ35commenta	RQ35commentb
2	175	30
5	121	15+
8	>300 feet	
10	220	7.5+
11	220	5
15	70	
17	300	3
18	70	
19	300	5
20	340	
24	110	10
26	20	35
27	250	5-6
28	125	40
30	200	5+
33	120	
34	250	5
35	175	14
36	180	5
38	200	
39	125	40
41	240	
42	130	7
48	85	
52	250	
54	200	40
55	120	
57	260	
58	85	
59	200	40
60	250	
61	300	3-5
64	200; 25	
66	100	4
67	240	
68	180	
71	320	
72	320	
73	180	3-4
74	175	10
75	100	2
76	18	3-5
78	50	
82	357	10+
83	357	
85	125	
86	90	
87	110	25
91	400	

Q35_Fill_In_x2		
SNum	RQ35commenta	RQ35commentb
92	110	25
93	146	
94	175	10
97	146	
99	200	
101	137	5
102	137	5
107	250	
109	210	40
110		3-5
111	75	
112	232	20
114	400	
116	240	10
117	150	40+
119	230	15
122	8	5
124	14	
125	15	
127	350	5
132		25
137	146	10
139	125	
140	400	
141	260	1/2
142	90	25
143	100	5
145	16	
146	75	6
147	98	
149	115	45
150	115	45
155	180	3
160	105	
165		5
171	130	15
175	60	
177	140	
178	240	12
181		5
184	230	5
186	125	40
188	87	8
189	90	4.5
192	100	10+
196	110	10
197	17	
199	25	
202	50	

Q35_Fill_In_x2		
SNum	RQ35commenta	RQ35commentb
204	102	28
208	36	10
209	36	10
211	190	3+
212	190	3
215	220	30
216	220	30
218	56	8
220	146	10
221	146	10
222	150	6
224	56	8
225	200	13+
226	145	
227	199	13+
232	134	3
233	130	5
237	8	
239	100	6
243	190	
250	150	7
255	275	
256	278	
257	200	
259	110	3-5
260	100	3-5
261	10	
264	278	
267	215	5
270	200+	
271		40
272	110	40
273	150	20
274	256	
275	75	15
278	256	
286	75	25
287	80	
288	80	
290	500	1
293	255	9
295	160	10
296	280	75
301	60	
303	180	10+
306	250	4.5
307	13	
311	150	
312	300	10

Q35_Fill_In_x2		
SNum	RQ35commenta	RQ35commentb
313	300	10+
314	20	
317	110	5
321	350	5
323	90	
325	15	5
326	180	
334	175	10
336	110	5
340	200	8
342	320	5
345	200	20
346	280	4
348	280	4
349	175	
350	95	
352	84	30
356	125	6
365	250	
366	80	2
367	68	
369	65	
370	140	
372	100	7
373	150	
377	80	6
379	140	
381	8	
383	150	3.5
384	265	5
385	85	3
389	100	
390	150	8
392	265	5
397	235	
398	400	5
399	390	4
401	200	7
403	300	low
404	125	
411	340	5
413	300	60

Q37_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ37comment
2	light industry
5	small businesses
7	don't know
19	property on state roads should be zoned commercial

Q37_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ37comment
20	don't know
22	better paying, more professional/skilled jobs
24	small in-home or professional offices
35	rural won't be available
35	rural won't be available
35	rural won't be available
36	jobs that can support family of 4
38	appropriate to rural character - home business etc
40	any types of jobs
41	advertise for jobs
45	any
56	light manufacturing, restaurants, small business
60	health centers, book stores, bakeries, restaurants
61	almost any
64	full-time, permanent w benefits
67	NONE
68	home office professional
70	37a. It's a rural area; 37b. When economy stable
71	ag. support jobs and services
76	recreational vehicle sales and services
77	not concerned
83	light industry
85	light industrial
88	any?
93	office work
95	any
97	office work
102	don't know
109	small business; small manufact., indust., retail
111	all jobs are important to the area
114	any jobs
116	all types of jobs
122	no jobs
126	light industry
130	small industry, craftsmen, niche agriculture
135	none
137	good paying jobs
138	small town - limited in number - need not be a lot
139	small stores to employ people
140	any jobs
142	farm
143	don't know
145	convenience store on state road or SMALL business
146	don't know
152	home-based and small "mom and pop" businesses
155	food restaurants; Hilton Hotels
158	professional; work at home via internet; light manu
161	ok to me - don't want commercial/ industrial enviro
164	above living wage - not tax supported

Q37_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ37comment
170	manufacturing
174	manufacturing
175	manufacturing
177	combination of manufacturing, service and retail
178	federational
189	retail; warehouse
191	factory
193	natural gas jobs
195	Home Depot; Lowes - pay health insurance
196	service garages; recreation; milling; agriculture
199	grocery store
203	entry level and up
206	agricultural
210	starting at better than minimum wage with benefits
217	all types
220	agricultural - small business
221	small business/farm jobs
222	none - prefer to commute
225	ag/home-based business
250	finance and other well-paying jobs for educated
252	small business and home business
259	jobs that start at \$10-15/hour
267	I travel to work
269	the kind that pay \$40k/year
272	all
273	too few need ALL types
279	all kinds
284	nursing home/manufacturing jobs
290	none
298	any job would be helpful
301	all types - whatever will save us from starving
306	quality manufacturing jobs for HS grads
311	don't know - rural nature demands commuting
317	gov't/state
318	none except for farming and ag. related
324	small business
328	all types
334	some light industry or commercial
337	go to Albany (for jobs)
345	refuse collection/farming
351	health care aides?
353	more than minimum wage
354	any real job with a business other than ag.
355	anything
359	it's a town, not a city!
368	jobs for men with little or no education
373	more small business within 30 miles
375	any
380	more IT jobs

Q37_Fill_In	
SNum	RQ37comment
398	wind turbines
399	64 \$ question!
401	all kinds
403	skilled labor/professional level
405	jobs to support the residence (residents?)
410	mills in Coby need to be re-opened
412	need to support our farmers

